SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORER

Spring 2000 Number 59

Searching for Heroes in Ecuador

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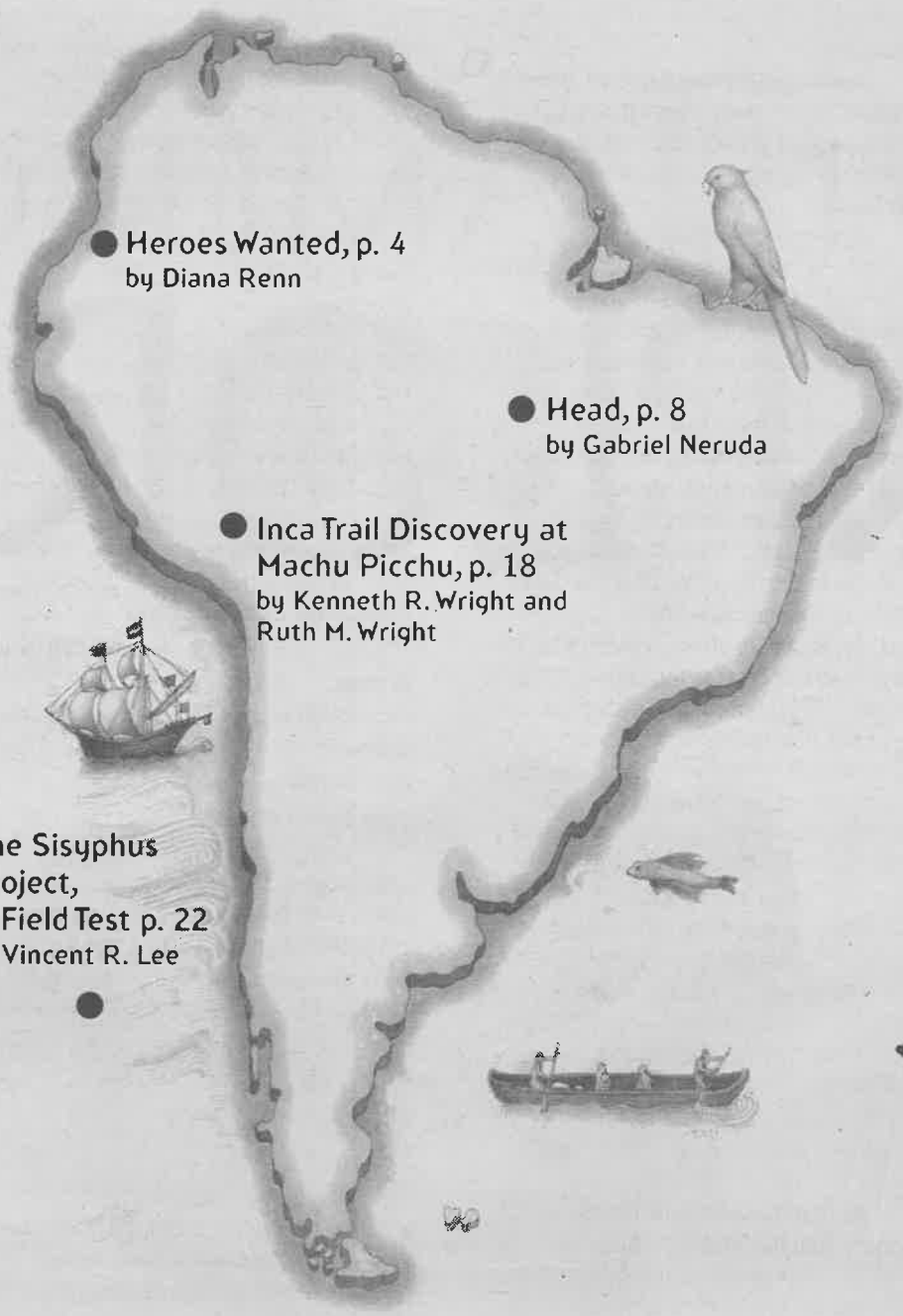

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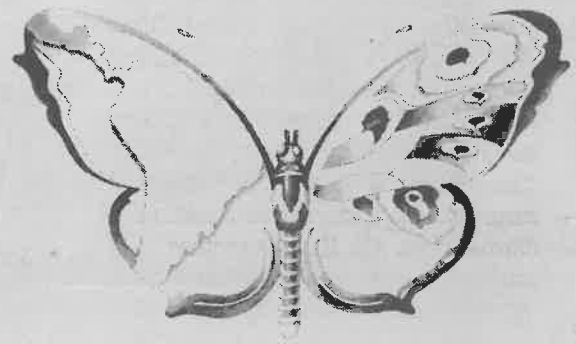

SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORERS

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- Support scientific field exploration and research in the social and natural sciences
- Promote field sports such as mountaineering, white water running, hiking, caving, biking and others.
- Awaken greater interest in and appreciation for wilderness conservation and wildlife protection.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Does "Cuzco" Measure Up?

(Issue 58, Winter 1999)

Congratulations to Dr. Columbus on her article "The Many Meanings of Cuzco." What is quite interesting is the extensive use of polysemy of multivocality.[1]

At the risk of appearing disingenuous, her alternate name for Cuzco as possibly "Fecal Mama" or "Fecal Crone" came as a surprise. *Aqha Mama* indeed translates as Chicha Mama. *Aka Mama* is another matter. The word *Aqha* is neither a synonym nor even a near homonym of *Aka*. The first, *Aqha*, means chicha. The second, *aka*, means fresh fecal matter.

Cuzco is supposedly associated with "fertilizing a field with manure." Fertilizer, one may reasonably assume, is usually dry. The q in *Aqha* is a simple occlusive consonant which is post velar and pronounced with the mouth completely open. The k in *aka* corresponds to the Spanish c, as in *casa*. The phonology of both letters differs in so many respects that error is doubtful, and we fail to see an immediate relationship.

Aka is defined as excrement. In the case of animal feces, when dry, there are quite different names. *Q'awa* is cattle dung; *taqya* or *uchha*, is llama, alpaca and sheep dung; *chhuschu* is horse and burro dung; note that animals introduced by the Spanish fit into Quechua linguistic categories quite nicely. The verb *wanuchay* means "to fertilize the earth with manure." Its stem, *wanu*, translates simply as fertilizer. Though it may exist, we found no such verb as *akachay*, which may translate as fertilizing the earth with fresh fecal matter.[2]

If Chicha Mama also means Fecal Mama or Fecal Crone as various names of Cuzco, then presumably we are dealing with fresh *aka*! This conjures up an image of hundreds of the Inca's subjects defecating into corn fields on command or, at best, llamas doing the same. No such extraordinary ceremonies exist in Spanish chronicles.

Andean linguistics can often present difficulties for researchers in various fields. Lynn A. Meisch, for example, describes some problems dealing with textiles[3]:

The Andean languages were not written before the arrival of the Spanish, who used their own orthography to represent the sounds of native tongues, including phonemes, which have no Spanish equivalent. Spelling remains a controversial issue to this day. For example, the earliest Aymara dictionary lists "tunic" as ccahua (Bertoni 1984 [1612]; a modern dictionary spells it khawa (De Lucc 1983). We step squarely into this controversy by equivocating, using a phonemic alphabet in most instances and, in others, resorting to the more conventional or familiar spelling: Incas rather than Inkas. Readers should be aware that the spelling in many publications represent local or politically preferred orthographies, that some words have disappeared, new ones have taken their place, and the languages have borrowed from one another.

There seems to be little doubt that Cuzco was a symbolic model for much of the empire, and that it was called "navel." Dr. Columbus suggests that "navel" and "placenta" have adjectival association. Indeed, why not? She also presents a sophisticated and subtle argument for another name for Cuzco: "Erect Male Penis."

We find the definition of penis as *ullu*. A more familiar form is *pichiku*. Interestingly enough, this same word is the name of a small monkey living in the Manu National Park. A really large-sized penis is called *pichilo*, also used to define a child's sex. The male erection translates as *k'aspiyay*. At the risk of appearing rude, we could not quite follow the author's polysemous path and tripped over "Erect Penis."

As far as the name "Navel" for Cuzco, Dr. Columbus is correct. There were many Cuzcos throughout the empire and by extension, many navels or models of the capital. [4] The author's approach is much more subtle than ours, and we are in no position to argue ethnolinguistics. It does strike us, however, that symbolically the Incas had an entire empire filled with erections!

If Cuzco can have an "Erect Penis" in its semantic field, why not Machu Picchu? The word *Picchu* or, more correctly *Pikchu* in Quechua phonemes, means more than a mere peak. It translates as a cerro with a wide base terminating in a sharp point. Could this represent generative power in nature? This could be a multivocal challenge, indeed.

We start by stripping away Spanish orthography and revert to Quechua spelling: Machu Pikchu and Wayna Pikchu. There is an uncanny resemblance of *Pikchu* with the word for penis: *Pichiku*! *Machu*, of course, means old; *Wayna* means young. Could Machu Pikchu also mean *Machu Pichiku*? And Wayna Pikchu mean *Wayna Pichiku*? Old Peak now becomes "Old Penis" and New Peak becomes "New Penis." There appear to be acoustical similarity, polarity and fertility. Wayna Pikchu, in fact, is so imposing and upright that "New Penis" may be most appropriate. "Old Penis" appears flaccid yet vulnerable, as "New Penis" in polar opposition forcefully penetrates our new semantic field....

The above, obviously, is a facetious example of multivocality and word play. A classic maxim of Tertullian (third century A.D.) was "*Certum est quia impossible est*," meaning "It is certain because it is impossible." In other words, don't believe your eyes and ears in matters of faith. Symbolic anthropology is not a matter of faith, but often based on complex data spread over time and space. [5]

—Robert Von Kaupp

Notes

1. Dr. Columbus' work on multivocality is excellent and was a delight to read. She works in a field too often ignored.

2. *Descripciones Fonologicas*, xx1-xxv1, In: *Diccionario Quechua-Español-Quechua* published by the Academis Mayor de la Lengua Quechua, Cuzco, 1995. Municipalidad del Qosqo, sponsored by UNESCO. This outstanding publication of 928 pages was fully researched by a large and distinguished board of Quechua academicians.

3. Lynn A. Meisch, "To Honor the Ancestors: Life and Cloth in the Andes." In: *Traditional Textiles of the Andes*; 15. Thames and Hudson, N.Y. 1997

4. Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*. Princeton University Press, 1991; 187-188.

5. The use of Spanish phonemes in such classic dictionaries as Domingo de Santo Tomas (Valladolid, 1560) or Diego Holguin (Lima, 1609) can be quite tricky. Here certain Quechua phonemes simply do not appear.

Today, Cuzco, for example, is more correctly Qosqo. The Diccionario *Quechua-Español-Quechua* (1995:468) suggests another name for Cuzco: *qos qos*. This term means "small mounds of earth and stone." This word is still used today by farmers in the region and has the identical meaning. Fernando de Montesinos (*Diccionario...*:468) noted term centuries ago. There is obvious similarity between *Qosqo* and *qos qos*.

Dear Robert—if I may,

Please call me Claudette. I ceased standing on formalities when childhood friends taunted one another with cries of "*Chivo supicho*!" (I have rendered this phonetically, but you will be able to make out the meaning if you bear in mind that the Quechua of my village was not glottal.) Remarks such as "*Chico supicho*!" although not addressed to me, diminished my interest in self-elevation.

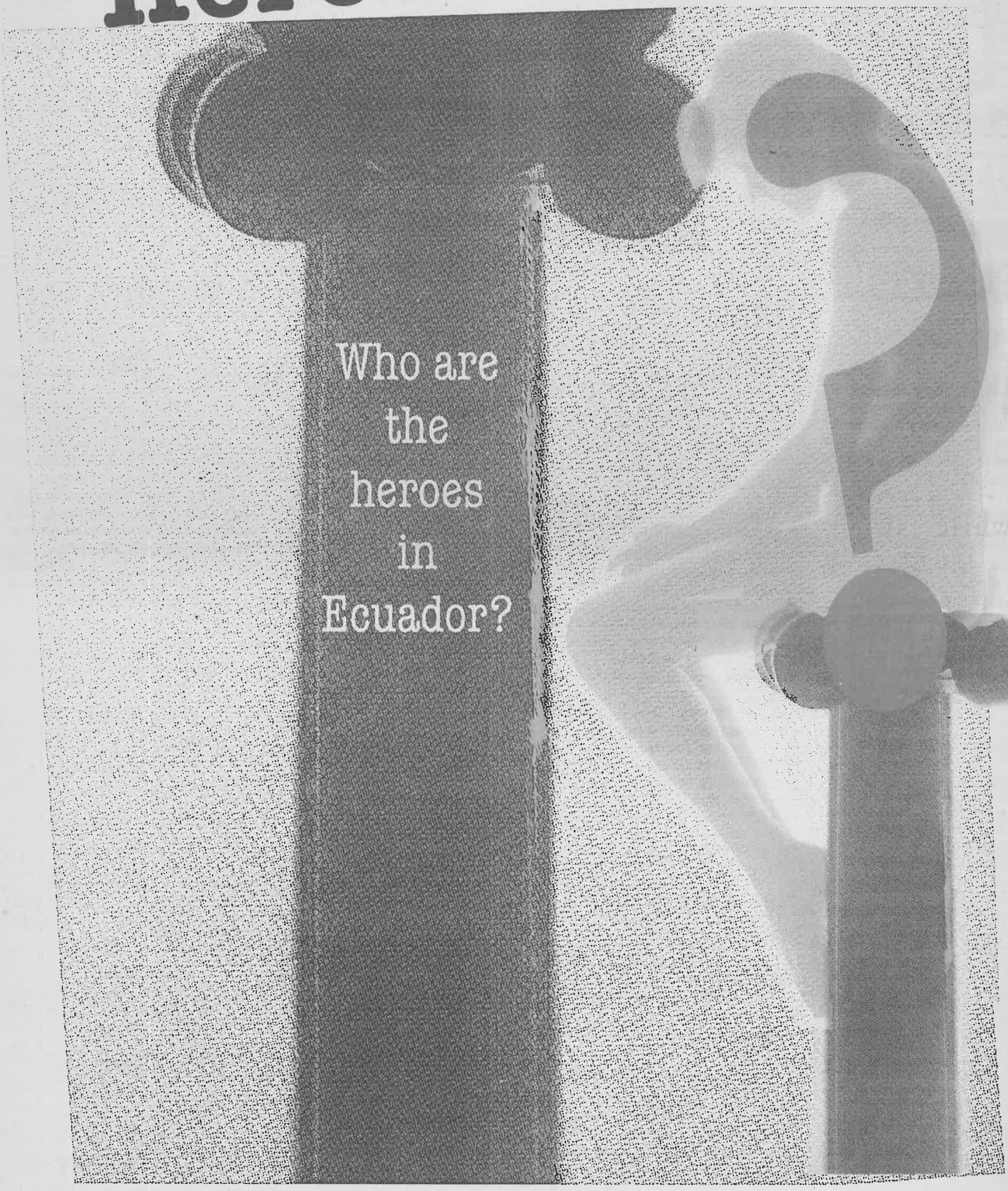
But on to more important matters. Your visionary paragraph on "Old Penis" and "New Penis" Machu Picchu and Wayna Pichiku brings to mind a photograph taken in Puno. In fact, if you will allow me, I enclose an illustration supportive of proliferation in matters such as the ones we are placing under inspection.

Indulge me, if you would, in a couple of small disclaimers to points you make in your acclaimable letter. I had hoped it was evident that the observations in my article evolved from acoustic and visual associations, not from dictionaries. It is acoustic association, for instance, that I believe links *aqha* and *aka*. Secondly, I wouldn't for the world take credit for the work of others, such as Robert Randall who connects Aqha Mama and "*cusco*" and associates both with fertilizing a field with manure and chicha. And it is Joseph Bastien who speaks of *ayllu* as you speak of the *ullu*, except with this difference: that...well, these are delicate matters, enough said, except I feel compelled to add, recent work desanitizing the Andean world does add zest to our explorations into how we presume the past to have been.

All the best,

Claudette Kemper Columbus

Heroes Wanted



The Monument to Nobody, and the missing hero, haunted me.

by
Diana Renn

In the center of the plaza loomed the Monument to Nobody. Amidst the graceful palms that bowed deferentially to Nobody, the white stone pedestal supporting Nobody resembled a stack of ice blocks, stark and cold, accidentally dropped from an airplane into Ecuador's steamy Amazon Basin.

At first its sheer size and whiteness inspired awe in this little jungle village, but a closer look showed the spreading cracks, the graffiti, the litter around the base. Awe faded further: there was no commemorative plaque to anything, no hallowed date or name. No austere bust gazed proudly into the distance, no tall statue clutched a rifle or sword.

"We are missing a hero in Misahualli," Carlos, our jungle guide, joked as we paused by the village Monument. "We have been waiting for one for a long time."

Diana Renn, a candidate for a Ph.D. in English at Brandeis University, is currently compiling and editing an anthology of essays written by teachers who have taught abroad.

The Monument to Nobody, and the missing hero, haunted me long after that jungle excursion. I was teaching English in Quito, traveling around the country when I could, but I began to view the country and its people with new eyes after seeing that heroless monument. Did it represent lack —great deeds unaccomplished, battles lost, warriors unrewarded, leaders unacknowledged? Or did it represent hope -- the potential for great deeds, battles won, warriors rewarded, leaders acknowledged?

Ecuador was a magical place for me where, despite the renowned natural beauties of the Galápagos Islands, the Andes Mountains, the Amazon Basin, it was the little things that fascinated me most, the moments that came and went in my everyday life there. I grew to love the juxtaposition of run-down little shops lit by solitary dangling bulbs next to elegant, crumbling colonial houses. My heart beat faster at the sight of the enormous red poinsettia trees: explosions of Christmas everywhere. I cherished the bright sunsets that flared up suddenly and then blew out like a candle. I was soothed by the sing-song voice of the street vendors selling lottery tickets.

But of course, as months went by, the poverty and lack of development pressed on me. It was a shadow I continually tried to beat back. The houses in slums and poor neighborhoods made me think of incomplete coloring books, as if a child flipping through pages of outlined structures had randomly filled in a few houses with colors and details, or just some parts of some houses. Many homes were painted -- or even constructed—on only one side. Often the planned second floor had never materialized, and wires for unbuilt walls stood up like strange, uncut hairs. Sometimes the structures seemed caught between dimensions, between a dream in someone's head and plans on a paper and a fully realized building. It was easy to view these homes as representations of failure; you could see where the money ran out in construction. I struggled to view them as potential: one day all these outlines would be filled in, the structures completed and in full color.

After seeing the Monument to Nobody, and as I became more aware of the realities of life in a developing country, I began to slip a hidden agenda into my English classes. In every class, with young students or with top executives in companies, in private classes or in large groups, I always made it a point to ask about heroes or to build in a unit on heroes. Unsuspecting students enjoyed the topic and thought I was merely teaching grammar and vocabulary in this context. Secretly, I was taking notes, trying to answer the larger question I was framing: what does heroism mean to people in a developing country?

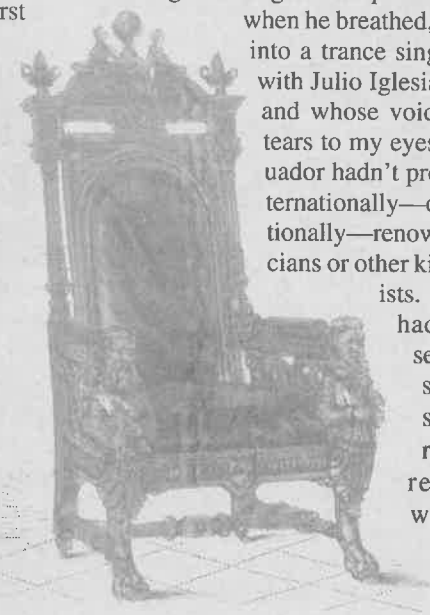
Ecuador didn't really have any heroes.

Initially, when I asked students the question: "Who are the heroes in Ecuador?" I was met with blank stares. Eventually someone would usually venture: "Jefferson Perez," the racewalker who won the first and only Olympic gold medal for Ecuador. After more thought, the names of some soccer players might tentatively come up. Simon Bolivar was inevitably mentioned, but then someone would clarify that he was a hero not just of Ecuador but of the entire former Gran Colombia region; Bolivar had to be shared with Venezuela and Colombia. Jamil Mahuad, the new president as of 1998 and the successor to a position riddled with corruption and mismanagement, was usually mentioned, with hope, as a promising potential hero with strong leadership skills, but it was too early to tell. Eventually people would conclude that Ecuador didn't really have any heroes, whether political, religious, military, cultural, athletic, or corporate.

We deny our past.

Some executives at a company I taught at in Quito became passionate about this topic. One student, Santiago, became almost angry. "This is why we are not a developed country," he said. "We have no heroes. We have no stories about heroes or about people in the past who took risks. When you have a story, you know who you are. If you know who your parents are, who your grandparents are, where you come from. If you accept it. But we deny our past. We have not made peace with the past. So we don't have a story. We don't have an identity. We don't have heroes."

Other students agreed and labeled Ecuador as a country with an "identity crisis." Some theorized that the lack of identity came from the legacy of conquest, of the Spanish conquistadors, of the mestiza race that has grown up to deny or detest their Indian pasts and their Spanish pasts and therefore to deny and detest themselves. Why would they look to the past for heroes if they were ashamed of that past? Other students went further and described Ecuador as having an "inferiority complex." I asked someone, who happened to be a gifted singer who practically sang when he breathed, who went into a trance singing along with Julio Iglesias records, and whose voice brought tears to my eyes, why Ecuador hadn't produced internationally—or even nationally—renowned musicians or other kinds of artists. And why had he himself not pursued a musical career? He responded with the term "inferiority



complex" as a way of explaining how Ecuadorians are often afraid to take risks and "put themselves out there" because they feel inferior to other countries. And he added, bringing us more clearly back to heroes, or, at the very least, role models: "No one has done it before. There is no example to follow of how that can be done."

Indeed, terms like "identity crisis" or "inferiority complex" often arose when I brought up the subject of heroes. Sadly, there is a kind of fatalism to this language of psychological disturbance, a resignation to these labels. I left these conversations feeling increasingly glum. Were there really no stories, no heroes, or was it just that they had yet to be uncovered and discussed? What would it take for a country, ranked among the ten most corrupt countries in the world, to make peace with its past, tell its stories, uncover its heroes, so that it might develop new heroes and move forward?

In the midst of my quest for heroes in discussions with my students, there was a national strike to protest Jamil Mahuad's sudden increase of gas and electricity taxes by 400%. Groups of laborers, primarily indigenous peoples, organized in all the major cities. Guayaquil, the big coastal city, witnessed the most violence and casualties. I watched on TV as the military sprayed teargas at a crowd that had become unruly. Legitimate protesters and general miscreants scattered for shelter. Caught in the fray was an unfortunate ice-cream vendor on his blue-painted *tricicleta.* I watched him run from one side of the street to the other, frantically trying to steady his ice-cream cooler and his shabby little umbrella. The rusty tricycle seemed to have taken on a life of its own, lurching out of his hands, desperate to find its way home like some horse spooked on the road. Sometimes smoke made me lose sight of the ice-cream vendor. I was riveted to the screen, determined to see him make it out alive. What was he thinking, I wondered, trying to sell ice-cream during a national protest, in the thick of a mob? I pictured his wife and children, the morning farewells as he pedaled off to sell his iced treats for the day. Would they have tried to stop him? "Daddy, it's dangerous today, please stay at home"? The idea of his working on such a day, in such a place, struck me as powerfully sad. Would anyone really pause to buy an ice-cream cone?

But in the next instant, I saw him as heroic, risking his life to support his family.

I held my breath and waited, scanning the screen, trying to see past the smoke and crowds. I rooted for him. I prayed for him. At last I saw the vendor pedaling madly out of the smoke. He pedaled down to the lower right-hand corner of the television screen and then I lost him for good.

I imagined him going home.

I found one, I thought with triumph. A hero. A man struggling to make a living under difficult circumstances.

But who besides me had seen him?

Not long after that incident, I encountered another unsung hero. I had a private class with a military man, a civil engineer in the Ecuadorian army. His name was Jose, but I and the other teachers referred to him privately, jokingly, as "G.I Joe," or "Military Man." He needed to study intensively to pass an English exam given by the U.S. military. Success on the exam would qualify him to attend a course in Florida. He had to master the material in twenty-six uniformly bound blue books issued by our military, and he had two weeks to perform this miracle.

I hated this unsmiling, rigid man.

Military Man showed up for his first class in full fatigues. I took an instant dislike to him. Unlike the vast majority of my students and unlike Ecuadorians in general, he scarcely smiled and made almost no effort to take responsibility for holding up his end of the conversation, whether we were speaking in English or Spanish.

I went into this class as if going into battle. Not knowing exactly what to expect with him, I armed myself with a heavy supply of supplementary material (books, exercises, grammar drills, pictures). I marched into the classroom feeling defensive, strict, efficient. And angry. I hated this unsmiling, rigid man. I hated the concept of the exam he was studying for, the concept of cramming twenty-six books into his head, all of which he would inevitably forget. I hated the books; everything was in a military context (Unit 1: "Frank Goes to Basic Training.") I hated teaching words like "mop" and "scrub" and "drill sergeant." I fired off a few jokes and quips to change the atmosphere, but they had glanced right off him. He sat at attention throughout the whole class. Then, worse, Military Man turned the tables on me. Refusing to speak English, he informed me in rapid-fire, machine-gun Spanish exactly how he would prefer our sessions to be conducted. Because he had such a vast amount of material to assimilate in so little time, he would prefer to go systematically through the appendices of the books: the structure and vocabulary lists, ticking off things as he learned or reviewed them. I was outraged that he would tell me how to teach, and I felt ill at the thought of trying to teach this way. Furthermore, it was clear I was going to learn nothing from this man; I would only endure two weeks of torture.

The next day, I tried his system, hating every moment of it. But surprisingly, he learned. He could produce the structures and words when I quizzed him. We raced through books, covering more ground than I might in a four-week session. I had never seen anyone learn so quickly.

Nevertheless, I determined to end that second session more or less on my grounds, by engaging him in some freer conversation. I asked him, in general, who was his hero—anywhere in the world—who he would most like to meet, and why. I expected either the standard response, that Ecuador has no heroes, or perhaps some ferocious military figure, some fighter somewhere in the world.

"Ghandi," he replied without even pausing to think.

I leaned forward. "Ghandi? That's interesting. Tell me why."

He explained, in the most articulate English I had heard him use yet, that Ghandi's principles of non-violence were increasingly important in our violent society, particularly in Ecuador which wasted a lot of time and money feuding with Peru. We needed to stop turning to violence as the answer to conflicts; we needed to pay attention to Ghandi's words of the past and apply them to other cultures and times.

My jaw dropped. I asked him another question: "What would you do if you were the president of Ecuador? What change would you make in the leadership of this country?"

"I would stop buying arms," he replied, again without missing a beat.

"Why," I asked, dumbfounded, "did you ever join the military?"

"To work for peace," he said. And he explained how he felt the military could potentially be a force for peace rather than a force for destruction, that he could put his talents and goals to greater use within that institution, that the military had great potential to produce heroes and change the country, in ways that need not resort to violence.

Over the next two weeks, we continued to spend most of the class doing his drill-sergeant approach to English, but whenever possible I slipped in my approach, asking him questions or giving him topics that would spark freer conversation. I asked what his favorite books were, and he rattled off a string of great humanist writers, with Gabriel García Márquez at the top of the list, as well as some metaphysical and spiritual books. He was a well-read man with a passion for stories. His skin seemed to soften. His eyes glistened. He sat less straight. He smiled. I could hardly believe our first session, looking back on it, how we had both been so defensive. As he shed his armor, I shed mine. I quietly laid down my weapons. And we talked extensively of heroes, and how he felt this country desperately needed a greater awareness of heroes.

What saddens me is that when I told people of this experience, nobody believed me. Fellow teachers and Ecuadorians alike said that I was being taken in. "No military man would mean any of those things," Ecuadorians scoffed. "They just don't think that way." Or he was flirting with me, trying to impress a gringa. And there was no way he was really learning so quickly, either: Military Men are stupid and slow. They are uncreative and unintelligent. They mindlessly follow orders from the equally inept people above them.

It occurred to me then that perhaps another reason for the lack of heroes in Ecuador—or in other places, for that matter—is a resistance to looking for them, a resistance to seeing them in unlikely places. Finding heroes might involve looking at things that might be unpleasant, in either the past or the present. It involves seeing beyond stereotypes and seeing the potential for a human being's growth or change. What kind of world do we live in if people can't see beyond their own walls of defense? What hope is there for heroism if people won't try to make peace with themselves or their culture?

The most poignant probing of that question I encountered soon after, in the form of a poem written by a young student, a sixteen-year-old girl who used an English class activity to explore Ecuador's ambivalence about making peace with the past. I will let her words speak for themselves:

Culture

We will begin by saying that we
don't know people, not even ourselves
Because we refuse to accept
what we once were—
our grandparents, our parents,
in short
our ancestors.

But they no longer matter to us.
We prefer the culture of those
other countries
a thousand times more
but always fearing what they
would say.

We are embarrassed by the form
I/he/she/you used to get dressed in
the canvas shoes
the ponchos.

Today, the most important thing
or the only important thing to be
is up to date
but for that.

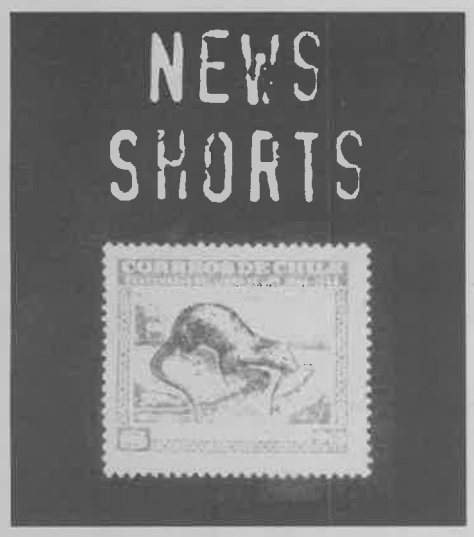
If you think there is no better
thing to be proud of
than you and your beliefs,
upon leaving your own tradition
moving away little by little to
another's,
in time our culture is dying.

And we don't stop to think, not
for a single moment.

—Gabriela Avedano, age 16

Near the end of my stay in Ecuador, I returned again to the Monument to Nobody in the village of Misahualli. I stared at it for a long time, from every angle. I stayed and stared until the sun, bored with me, retired and the moon rose. Perhaps it was a trick of the moonlight, perhaps it was my tired eyes, but I suddenly saw the monument covered—completely covered—with people. With schoolchildren, street vendors, executives, laborers, housewives and husbands. With Carlos the jungle guide, Santiago the student, the ice-cream vendor on his tricycle, Jose the Military Man (who did pass his exam later), and the sixteen-year-old poet. With ordinary people trying to earn a living and raise children and improve their homes while corruption and mismanaged money and absurdity raged on all around them.

The monument in Misahualli surpasses any monument I have seen in all my travels. It is more impressive to me than any glittering bronze bust or any stone man on a galloping steed than I have seen in Europe or the U.S. It is a monument greater than any individual hero we could think of to commemorate. It is a monument to our imaginative powers, to our different realities, to our individual hopes and dreams. It is a monument to the potential hero in us all.



Things That Go Boom in the Night

You might want to put off that hike in the area where Chile borders on Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina for a while. Estimates put the number of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines in this zone at up to a million. As the saying goes, one anti-tank mine could spoil your whole trek. General Augusto Pinochet had the mines laid in the 1970's as a gesture of ill will toward Chile's neighbors, and they've been there ever since. As a gesture of good will, General Izurieta, current commander of the Chilean Armed Forces, announced Chile will begin clearing the mines soon. Experts say removing the mines could take up to ten years and will cost millions of dollars.

Scope This Out

If you've never been to South America or have been to South America and never looked up, you've never seen the Southern Cross, the Eta Carinae nebulae, Cetus, Capricornus, or the Sculptor Group, glorious celestial wonders all.

That's too bad, of course, but you'll be glad to hear the new giant telescope in Chile will be taking some of the best pictures ever seen of the universe, and you should be seeing photographs before long. Atop Cerro Pachon, the Gemini will have a mirror measuring just over 8 meters in diameter. Built by an international consortium, the telescope will be equipped with state-of-the-art instrumentation to provide deep and sharp views of the universe at both optical and infrared wavelengths. The Gemini is designed to investigate the origin of stars in galaxies. Infrared views are best suited to penetrate the dust shrouds of young stars to reveal the early stages of their formation. Gemini will also shed light on how the furthest known galaxies came into being and evolved.

For a better understanding of the universe, stay tuned.

A Country by Any Other Name...

If Venezuela's constitutional assembly gets its way, no one will be going to Venezuela anymore. Worse than that, Angel Falls won't be in Venezuela. Or Maricaibo. Or even Caracas.

In honor of the 19th century Latin American liberator Simon Bolivar, the constitutional assembly voted to no longer call the country "Venezuela" but instead "The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela."

The name change was initially voted down, and not for any frivolous reasons. The cost of altering passports, currency, and official documents to reflect the change is astronomical.

Still, it looks like a go.

So, if you're going to that country up there on the north side of South America, above Brazil, to the right of Colombia, and the left of Guiana, try to get it right.

A Bad Idea Whose Time Has Come and Gone

On December 1, 1999, in an attempt to stymie drivers crossing into Mexico to sell their rusted clunkers, Mexican authorities demanded up to $800 for every car headed south of the border. Although this fee could be paid by credit card and would be refunded when both car and owner returned to the U.S., drivers in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico raised Hell. "A measly $800 isn't going to stop someone bent set on selling their car in Mexico," claimed one angry motorist. Also, drivers planning to drive through Mexico to Central and South America were concerned about interest accrued on the fee charged to their credit card, as they wouldn't re-enter the U.S. until months later. Faced with wrathful opposition, the Mexican authorities dropped the fee after two days. The whole idea is currently being re-evaluated.

Members are always writing in with some question or other, keeping us from doing our jobs, and generally making pests of themselves.

We shouldn't be expected to know everything. That's what the membership's for. If you want to know anything in the future, mark it for the "Where Did I Read That?" column and if you don't get satisfaction, well, that's life.

1. I heard somewhere that some years after the Orson Wells "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast, some radio station in Quito aired it again in Spanish with different results. Apparently, the radio audience wasn't just miffed, but so angry that a mob marched on the radio station and burned it to the ground, killing everybody. Does anybody know where I read this?

2. There's a quotation that goes something like, "God save me from Argentine _____, Chilean friendship, and Peruvian justice." I've forgotten what goes in the blank. Please help me.

3. Some scientific organization, probably the Bronx Zoo or something, offered $10,000 to anyone who could produce Fawcett's 60-foot anaconda. I heard that amount has since been upped to $50,000. Can anyone confirm the initial amount offered, if it's indeed been increased, if (as I've been told) the offer stands but the length of the serpent been lessened to 40 feet, still with no takers? Any information would be appreciated.

4. When I visited C. N. Griffis (*West Coast Leader, Peruvian Times*), he told me a story about how the president of Ecuador once offered to sell the Galápagos Islands to Mr. Scripps (half owner of Scripps Howard newspaper chain) because the islands were deemed worthless. Scripps is alleged to have declined, because he agreed. Can anyone shed any light on this?

5. For some time now, I've been trying to track down the book *Battles with Giant Fish*. The last I heard, there was a copy in the library in Havana, but I have not been able to verify this.

Please send questions and answers to **explorer@samexplo.org.**

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Head

Gabriel Monteleone Neruda

It has been suggested that an accountant is only a historian of recent moneys, and wears only the same mind a historian wears, arranging variously misleading needlepoints of data so they may be handled more comfortably. An acquaintance, a friendly acquaintance perhaps but not quite a friend, who was captain of a cargo ship told me he wanted a purser, an accountant, for a voyage from London across the Atlantic and through the Amazon.

Captain Sanctuary was no Ahab, as well as I could tell, and the lord knows I was never intended to be an Ishmail.

Having no knowledge of shipping and yet feeling adequate to accountancy I agreed to accompany him.

In earlier conversations when he had mentioned his numerous adventures in shipping I had suspected him of behaving conscientiously with an accurate responsibility, and of possessing a core of intelligent kindness, so mostly I was unworried of long days looming under his command, of long weeks and of long months bobbing like Huck Finn's fishing cork.

London is England's principal itch, like a suppurating pimple continuously exacerbated by bacteria from everywhere. So when he said London I understood he meant London money, and that the ship would sail from Swansea.

I meandered from San Francisco to London, and to the docks in Swansea, and was unimpressed when I saw his massive steamer, WHITE WHALE. Captain Sanctuary was no Ahab, as well as I could tell, and the lord knows I was never intended to be an Ishmail. He did not brood and gnaw his fingers, and I was naturally too cautious often to walk into traps.

I arrived at the bloated great boat in the evening before the morning of our sailing, noting that all of my prospective mates who had already arrived had been partaking of the frivolities of the local parlors. The reek and bluster of cheap booze was everywhere, and the drifting of haze of tobacco etc. Amiable feminine shrieks were loud, subduably loud, loud enough to be called upon to hush.

I found my berth, my cabin, earlyish, which was tiny as a prison cell and yet bigger than a hatbox. It had a dim bulb, and in a cupboard a lamp which threw greasy shadows upon the edges of a greasy yellow light.

I tried to read, and was unable, so I lay on my bunk, or cot, and chased and gathered my lines into a circle, and I smalled the circle until it was a point, and I slept.

Sounds of the morning gathered about, and I could smell the dawn, just passed, and the sizzling breakfast. Once more I was an early arrival to the scene, and I introduced myself to the great jolly cook, Pluck, and to the engineer, Sandy.

Both men were born to smile.

"Filthy goddamned brig," Sandy greeted me jovially. "What in all the lengths of hell was them bastards doing while I was toying the ladies ashore? She was stowed amiss. You can feel it in her bones.

"It is bloody ill," he smiled. He growled, and he grunted, and he flushed the clogging in his nostrils violently into his cupped fingers, and he wiped the goo across his shirt.

We shook hands.

Pluck, our Santa Claus of a cook, jolly as could be, was chugging around like a great choo-choo train. His chins bounced in a red and friendly manner, and the flabby lobes of his ears flapped happily. Sweat bounced from his pores and swung from his earlobes like pendulums, and let go.

I was to be ducked whole in the micropolitics of the ship, and I looked forward to the earnest frivolity. I had been there before, and was unscarred, mostly.

Our breakfast was wealthy with hot salty fats, blessedly somewhat relieved by Pluck's own freshly baked bread which was rich with germ and bran. Coffee ran...

Pluck had been with Captain Sanctuary for ages and ages, and theirs was a love embellished by a wonted reciprocity. It was a joy to behold it. Pluck slept in a cabin off the galley and its outlengths, which were farm, or garden.

His galley was fully furnished with everything a cook might request, almost, with pots and pans, cauldrons aplenty, knives and fridges and freezers. The knives he kept keen as Excalibur, and the fridges and freezers at an assortment of temperatures. He had cans and tubs and crates.

Hanging from the ceiling were bales and boxes in nets and in bags, swinging in swirling whorls, labeled and not, hanging at 2 levels touching, with their ropes gathered in bunches and strung like the strings of balloons to hooks driven in the walls. An army might have hidden up there.

Pluck's able, fidgety helper was a little fellow called Knockers, for reasons I choose not to ponder. He was a miniature personality and an exceedingly serious individual indeed. Once he informed me that he had changed his name when it had occurred to him that his parents had been presumptuous when they had christened him, cruelly presumptuous because they could not have known what his personality would be. "By naming me in their ignorance they attempted to define the limits of my soul," he said.

And so when he was able he had changed his name.

Many times I have found that my interests were best served by withdrawing into an appearance of misunderstanding what is laid before me, and so I did now. I responded with my commonest noncommittal retort, and I said, "Good."

Knockers was employed, much to the gratification of everybody concerned, in the farm which lined the outlengths of the galley. Pluck, who was a wise man in our human ways, told him his job. Wondrous healthy crops were produced, a rarity in any situation and aboard a ship a secular miracle.

They grew broccoli, and we dined upon sprouts and leaves and flowers. They grew soy, and we ate sprouts and soup hot and cold, and the beans everyway. They grew cabbage and we ate unsalted salads of cabbage. They grew onions, and we ate leaves and bulbs. They grew dandelions, and we ate roots, leaves, and flowers, in our unsalted salads. They grew potatoes, o blessed potatoes.

Days occurred, each but a little different from another, much as people are each but a little different from another and each has its little day.

But our meat was always canned, salty, fat.

Somewhere among these considerations the ship shoved off and the sea rolled under us like the years of lives, running. Days occurred, each but a little different from another, much as people are each but a little different from another and each has its little day.

Days occurred, and nights occurred. The weather was good and the weather was bad and the weather was in the welter between, in a chaos of calm and wild.

Soon I and my fellows became familiar and friendly and we settled into the common fall of things. Although I was effectually a nonentity I dined with Captain Sanctuary and the Chief Engineer, Sandy, and with the Doctor, Dr. Equanimous. Also the Chief Mate was there, and Pluck rolled about us like an attendant wheel. Knockers fidgeted in the background, darted to our foreground, and sped away, sometimes just listening although nothing magnificent was ever spoken.

We ate in the saloon, which resembled a living room and a dining room. Heavily stuffed chairs inwardly surrounded the walls, and those chairs had been wrapped thoroughly in a course plastic which drained the moisture both inside and out. I remembered, every time I sat in one, how it always felt when I stuck my hand and my arm in a cold sandy hole searching for clams on the beach.

And yet they were a bulwark to be grateful for, like wombs unaware of their inhabitants and of the comforting effect produced in their inhabitants by the immersion in estrogen. We complained of them constantly, and yet as if we were hippopotami in a watering hole, we wallowed in them amiably.

During meals we sat round a table in sturdy unupholstered chairs which had been bolted deliberately. Captain Sanctuary's chair possessed the only cushion, and was unbolted.

Such was an inviolable principle. Only the Captain might swing about like a cannon to address whom he chose.

Captain Sanctuary's eyebrows were imperious in themselves, and leaped forth from his forehead like sails of the grand old sailing ships, like the wings of eagles. From their perch below, his eyes could bore in upon the recipient of their gaze until one's mind hung in smoking tatters, or felt clutched and skewered. His only knowledge was an information concerning affairs pragmatical, as he called it, taking a sly dig at those who fancied useless esoterica. He was a sly old sea dog.

My guess is that he was hightailing it from something in petticoats and a nursery, or from his lack thereof.

Dr. Equanimous sat at the table also, and obviously he was the icon of sophistication, clever as the devil. Often I wondered why he had been cast among us, and suspected he had misbehaved, having been tuned a few lines too finely by the Creator. Perhaps he had never been given a fit example to live down to.

Sometimes as we chatted, the Doctor would raise his hand before his mouth and smile. Sometimes he would accompany us in our sallies of vain inanities, our silly and important gossipings.

Wisdom is a bitter virtue, but it is wiser simply to force oneself to sleep than it is to disappear altogether. Weariness has taught me that pretty notion, and I am grateful for that weariness.

If he smiled behind his hand, we knew that soon he would beg politely to be excused and then he would stroll away onto the deck or to his cabin, or to his surgery. If this happened, the Captain would bend to me and say, "I do not understand that man. His aplomb confuses me, and angers me." Clearly the Captain was intrigued by the Doctor, but the Doctor would intrigue with nobody.

Sometimes after our dinners closed, at his explicit invitation, which was often couched as an entreaty, I thought, I would pad across to the Doctor's cabin, which was a better cabin than mine. He dearly loved his nightly tipple, and he had provided himself ably with gin. He had been in many of our world's theaters, and he had more tales than had Boccaccio, and he delighted in an audience of one.

My cabin was a tiny thing, though much

Gabriel Monteleone Neruda worked for a coffee consortium in Brazil after World War II. He currently lives in Larkspur, California with his two cats.

bigger than an eyelid. In my innocence I had brought too many books and had scrupulously arranged them on the shelf provided, according to the birth-years of the words. But soon I learned that the sea did not care about my scruples, and now they were neatly piled in a bag I hung from a nail.

Shakespeare was there, and Boswell's LIFE, and Blake and Shelley: 2 men of the earth, one of fire, and one of air. Our fellow of the water had not yet appeared to us, and any of the ether would be inscrutable.

Each copy was something like a not overly complete oxford, with a print exceedingly clear, a clearness of line which became an invisible clarity once entered. And I had similarly big volumes of Charles Fort, who always had the effect of arranging my mind in to an ease, and of Edgar Poe, who made me smile.

I felt I was well-mounted against the proud meaningless forces of chaos. I understood that some of these friends would be unable to speak with me during some of the times to come, and I felt prepared.

I was not wholly an inexperienced fellow and I believed I did understand how people behave when we are stuck together for lengthy spaces, and being a bit of a seditious inciter I brought along with me several cheap paperbacks which I intended to lose tactically among my fellows once the time had drawn sufficiently.

Always I have experienced an identifiable pleasure in placing mindbombs clandestinely, and these books I selected consisted of works by my fellow inciters, by such as Charles Williams and by Theodore Sturgeon, by Edward Lucas White. I sought explosions to jar one's perceptions of psychological orderliness.

It has been mentioned that it is commonplace for us to place deliberately specific books, on our coffee tables and in our bathrooms so that they might be seen by our neighbors, our visitors and friends, and what I proposed to do was a simple corollary to this illuminating procedure.

Mostly in those evenings when I was alone I did just what you do in those evenings when you are alone. Sometimes I browsed a volume lazily and ruminantly, and sometimes I was able to read a book vigorously, entering far.

Sometimes I could not get beyond the face of the page, and I would stop the effort and I would only doodle on a page, scribbling what was sometimes poetry, and commonly scribbling what would later prove the usefulness of nonsense.

It is no easy thing to go outside of the self but it is also no easy thing to stay inside of it. One evening I dictated some pieces I called imperfect equations, pieces I alleged.

Perhaps my favorites of these imperfect equations were, "Wisdom is selflessness accepting its ego," and, "Preconception is death." Such things are only paper poetry, I suppose.

On those evenings when my mind ran black I would force myself to sleep. In earlier years when that would happen I would pour my tipple down my throat until I disappeared.

Wisdom is a bitter virtue, but it is wiser simply to force oneself to sleep than it is to disappear altogether. Weariness has taught me that pretty notion, and I am grateful for that weariness.

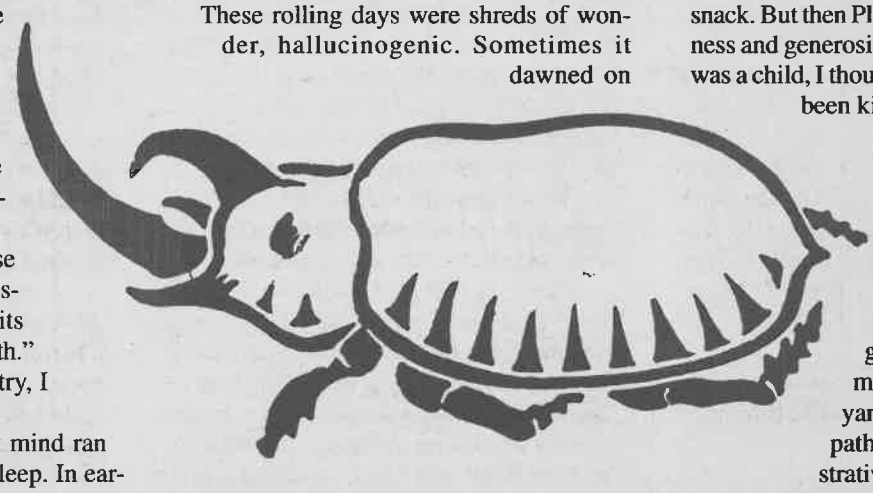
Frequently as I entered my cabin I smiled bleakly at the black stampede as the cockroaches flashed from my sight. Our ship had cockroaches as plentifully as any political convention has boastings of a true morality, and always I found it impressive. I could never determine whether they fled from me or from the burst of light.

Some of those roaches were as big as both of my thumbs, and it seemed wasteful the gods had not devised some cuddly fluffy roach-gobbler who loved to purr while its tummy was being tickled, and who always smelled as if it had just been shampooed.

The doors to our cabins had locks, of course, but they all responded to the same key. Sometimes I fancied it was just as well, since I had left my clutch of Faberge eggs at home in my estates in the Cotswolds, ha ha.

Sometimes if I left my articles on my cot they would disappear, but I did not much miss them. It was on my cot I left some of those subversive paperbacks, and invariably they scooted off to do their work on some hapless thief. Grief is meaningless to the immortals, I surmised, but vengeance is good hard fun. Many a cabin has been used as a trap, I guessed.

These rolling days were shreds of wonder, hallucinogenic. Sometimes it dawned on



me that I participated in something quite special, inspired perhaps. In the distance on the cloud-capped ocean I could almost catch sight of flaming dragons which fled as I brought my focus upon them.

I was not unhappy.

Much time I spent in my office, counting among the numbers in the ship's books. It was easy to sneak my better books in, and my time was so easy I spent many long days just reading what I chose.

When together with the other men we chatted amiably about our trifles, much as you do, and we gossiped hugely concerning the way of the ship, concerning each other's idiosyncrasies. I could never trust anybody who did not enjoy gossip.

And sometimes I would go visit the Skipper, Captain Sanctuary, in his comfy cabin, which was clearly the best cabin on board. His books, I noticed, were mostly professional manuals, and travel books by T.E. Lawrence, H.M. Tomlinson, Wilfred Thesiger. Curiously, he had none of the books of those old sea voyages: if it is not contemporary it does not exist, I supposed.

Because he was the Master, the Skipper, the Captain, his books obeyed his will and did not fall from the shelves during the turbulence, and so they were placed neatly in no particular order I could discern. I did notice that most of the blue ones were together.

Pluck, our Cook, obeyed and babied the Skipper, I noticed, and sometimes brought him uncalled a choice bottle, or a choice snack. But then Pluck was the soul of sweetness and generosity to everybody. When he was a child, I thought, somebody must have been kind to him.

Sometimes when I chatted in the Skipper's cabin, Pluck would bring us merely the simplest wedges of cabbage, and we would thank him as garrulously as a landsman might thank a man who yanks his daughter from the path of a train. This demonstrativeness pleased everybody and was not just air.

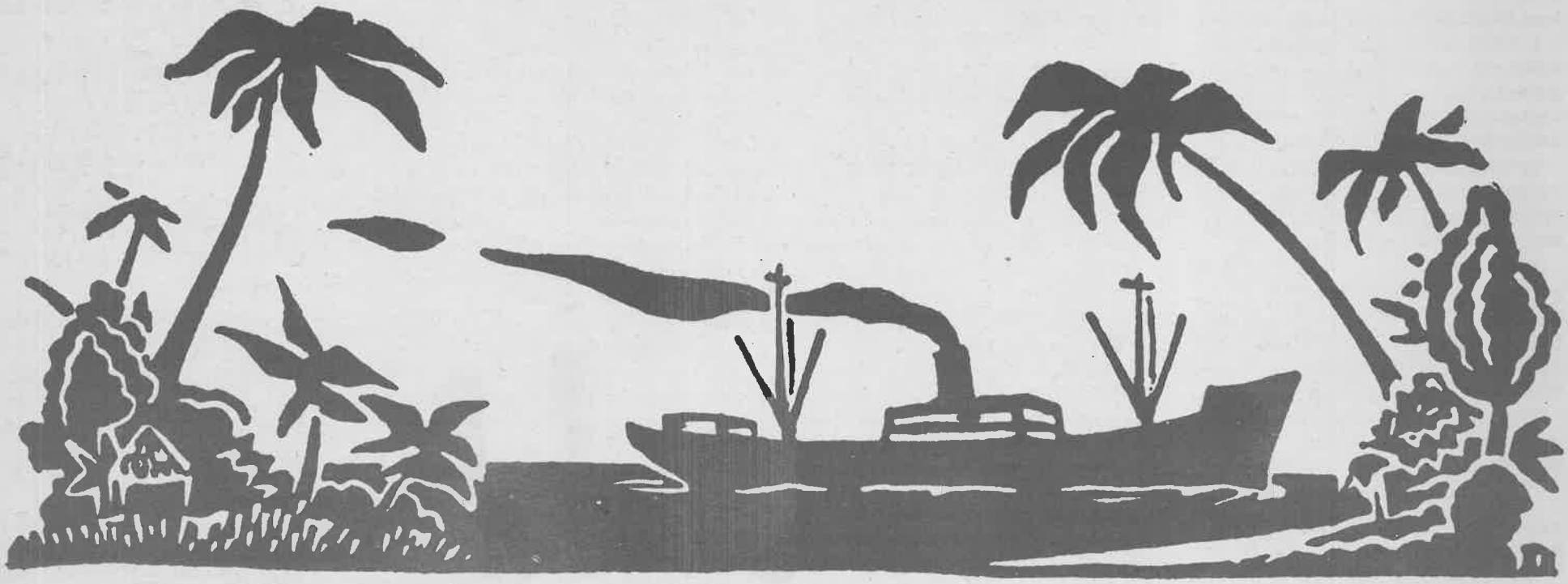
Pluck's assistant, Knockers, kept the Skipper's cabin, as he called it, "the spotlessest cabin on the ship." Knockers had the knack of being invisible, and he was never there when I was chatting with the Skipper.

This cabin was a livingroom, had nice chairs, his own little stove, an aquarium that appeared to have nothing in it except for water and a few rocks. From a stout brass hook hung a fishing net within which were glass fishing weights, I supposed, until I got closer and saw they were half a dozen or so of shrunken human heads such as an equatorial cannibal tribe might bestow upon an exceedingly well-armed and assertive visitor.

They were small enough for cats to chew on.

Days rolled under us like stars.

Every seaman aboard appeared a superstitious fellow, as is customary where people move among a vastness. Every seaman watched the birds as if personally directed portents, sibylline commentary. Commonly a man would lean against the railing above the waves and would speak to his wife, and speak to his beloved dead,



slightly less pleasant than is a woman with a small man's complex, he said, and this man had the additional misfortune of wearing a strawberry birthmark across both eyes, resembling a dancer's domino, a coon's spectacles, or Zorro's mask. And his skin was as yellow as an old manuscript, with blackish splotches like burned holes. His attitude was the white man's burden.

This man bought his mule-train and he struck back into the jungle, hoping to swipe the treasure from under the noses of a cannibal tribe he said it belonged to. He was not heard from, though a couple years passed, or a few.

Much later a prospector came through the town, and he sat swilling my gin just where you fellows are sitting, our tale-bearer told us, and he drew a bundle from his bag, undid its covering of leaves and showed me a shrunken human head he said he bought for a song upriver. "He told me it must be a thousand years old, and I saw that it had a curious discoloration about the eyes, like a coon's eyeglasses, and I said I doubted if it was that many days."

Days rolled over us like stars.

We sat there. The doctor and the hustler and I, and we swilled a drop a gin, each thinking or just feeling or, more likely, a little bit of neither and both. I was in no land of soft green meadows.

In reciprocity, the Doctor began a tale. He said that many long years earlier he had been attached to a party of explorers, mercenaries really, and they were sent for money through the bush. They had been told of a pigmy tribe, and a certain entrepreneur wanted samples.

These little dolls had the best eyesight in the world, and the healthiest, most robust tissues throughout, and a scientist in America believed he had a solution for harvesting these rewarding parts. Enough money was available to provide litigation and legislation to make this business feasible.

An adult male would attain 2 feet in height, so they should be easy to capture and to transport.

Where the maps led was in the distant bush, and no natives could be found. It was as if a network of telepathy controlled the land.

One day a white man stumbled into camp and he was hot with fever. He told us he and his party had been on the same adventure we were on, and had found what we sought. In his bag was a bundling of shrunken, or miniature, human heads, and they smelled like mushrooms, faintly.

The leader of their expedition had run afoul of the pigmy priestess, he said, and lay dying in camp. "How is he dying?" we asked, and were told he was in a tent alone. Voices were heard from the tent, voices shrieking, arguing, and the singing of weird songs in many voices raised sometimes athwart each other simultaneously. And the voices would interrupt each other, speaking at different speeds.

None were permitted to enter the tent, and the dying man brandished his rifle toward any who attempted to cross the door. And yet he begged for, and received, water and food in great quantities, as if he were feeding an army.

Someone had slit an aperture in the tent and had watched as their leader hacked at his body with a huntingknife, something like great carbuncles was growing there, and blood ran, and his body was covered with fist-sized bumps, and wounds.

Our man died, and we proceeded toward his camp.

a welter of little heads

Only one white man returned, and the bearers had gone. We heard that cross-running chorus of screams and pleadings issuing from the tent, and we entered the tent. The man was in, and he appeared delirious. He was lying on his cot.

In one hand he held a bloody knife, and the floor was a welter of little heads, and blood. I thought I could hear echoes of an agony. His eyes tracked us as we moved, the Doctor said.

Everywhere he had been heavily muscled were cicatrices, wounds or scars, nearly round and the size of a fist. "I felt," the Doctor said, "as if I were witnessing a thinning of the tapestry we call the world of matter, and as if something was attempting to force a passage though from the far side."

Fresh bulges were developing around his belly, and as we watched 2 of them opened and small heads burst forth, about the size of a man's fist. Their eyes were open, and the man on the cot was watching them now, and they were watching him.

He screamed and with his dripping knife chopped and sawed at their bases, their necks which were sliding forth from his body's openings. The heads lopped, and rolled.

He lay back, and shuddered as the third head broke through. Their eyes were fixed upon each other's eyes, and had no room for us. He seemed exhausted wholly.

Slowly the intruder slipped forth, past his neck and his shoulders and farther. His eyes now swept the room, understanding everything, and when my eyes met his I knew he remembered how my mother had cooed to me when I was at her breast, and he remembered, if that is the word, everything I had ever experienced.

Now his body was revealed to his thighs. It was anatomically correct in every particular, and it was an adult uncircumcised male perfectly. An umbilical cord ran through the genital pelt down his left leg and disappeared into his host's body.

I thought of centaurs.

"What is a man but the shadow of his chains?" the homunculus said to his host, who was lying in apparent resignation, waiting. "You have betrayed a formidable obligation, and this results. Let us return together," and both men collapsed.

The Doctor ceased his narrative, and again I thought that this truly was no land of soft green meadows, gamboling fawns, and sweet music. Mozart was never here, observing Vivaldi past his steepled fingers. This was Wagner country, harsh, unempathetic, brutally innocent.

Once more we were in silence. Each of us pulled at his gin. I did not know what to say, and somehow I felt embarrassed at receiving such a tale. The Doctor saw that our new acquaintance and I shared a difficulty, and he said, "Please forgive the indecency of my manners. I appear to have the habit of indiscretion."

remarking on this floating twig and on that floating twig, on this bubble and on that bubble, endlessly.

And we returned to our ship. Of course my huntingknife was gone, though the door was still ajar. The Doctor's door was still locked.

With us, 2 Brazilian pilots climbed aboard, to guide us through those dangerous waters to come. These men were not stoics, but behaved as if life were an uninterrupted joy. They loved being hotblooded animals where the sun was hot.

Going the river they chattered like Bedouins, remarking on the tiniest spectacle, on this shadow and that shadow, on this floating twig and on that floating twig, on this bubble and on that bubble, endlessly. This resembled an infantile chattering, to my cold northern ears, and kept the thoughts at bay.

Every hovel we passed, every rubberfarm, had its own satellite dish open to the messages of consumerism. These ears reminded me of a gypsy's crystal ball, or Sauron's palantir, and they brought into each acquisitive personality the insatiable carnival of moguls, popes, and presidents.

The mosquitoes were as commonplace as was the human riffraff we saw everywhere along the shores. We saw people in the last throes of despondency, twisting into cruel caricatures of their natural selves.

Our prime yankee woman-damned man-damned goddamned mogul, salesman of presidents and popes, Daniel Ludwig, proprietor of the Empire State's Building once brooding rapaciously in his eyrie in its high eye-sockets, bribed and captured and butchered a Brazilian land as big as Connecticut, razoring it until the bloody guts washed down the Amazon into the sea.

Now along the riverbanks we witnessed the vestiges of his error as it slunk toward the primeval ooze of its reentry. Creatures of every tribe, race and species, slunk in consciously uncomprehending agony from the eviscerated jungle homelands toward the uncaring sea.

I was reminded of an innocent sailor boy who once stood incomprehensible in bravery for his hanging. As an organism he died as the hemp closed about his neck, and as he was raised, (for in a sea-hanging one does not drop,) he was watched by his mates not to squirm.

The jungle resembled a god who had appeared in our dreams and had strengthened his communication until the dream dissipated and the god remained.

He did not squirm, of course, because this living organism was not hanged: it was a dead man who was hanged, and he cheated the hangman, and he cheated the hangman's masters most bitterly. He did not win.

Weather was variable as we rolled up the sinking Amazon against the tide of myriad floating islands of verdure, and alligators, and half-submerged trees floating to the sea. Alternately we were poached and we were floated out to dry, and bugs and insects kept us company.

Mosquitoes were rampant.

As we moved the jungle receded like an ancient scroll fitly rolling out its tale. We watched the rolling of its patterns, observing the colors of its weave.

The Doctor sat placidly in the deck shadows, searching an immense tome about tropical diseases. I felt like a bait the jungle decided to swallow.

Sometimes a canoe pulled alongside, and we would spin off toward the land on a mission of discovery. We were shown a local Stonehenge, and local immense sculpted heads, totem poles, burrowed rings.

Once in an explorer's journal I had read of an anaconda 60 feet long. The explorer's commentators did not dispute the figure, because of the explorer's reputation. Commonly in the papers I had read of a village being terrorized by a 40 foot specimen which, once captured and killed, was resolved into a 20 foot corpse. The locals called this beast *sucuruja*.

From such canoes we purchased many fresh foods, including a welcome variety of fruits, and many freshly killed birds.

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a mother maybe, or a lover he has never known. Always this is a communication with his god, spanning the essential silence, a testament in aloneness. I do this, and so do you.

Tales would be told with unsaid endings, tales whose beginnings and endings might be merely incidental. Glances would be used to bring forth the bad birth, and a message would be passed like a baton.

The winds rolled over us and all around us, mixing the air and the water. The winds were a grim avalanche, and every dawning brought us warmer as we came closer to the green belly of the world. Our few chickens were long plucked, and our freezers were running out of meat: mostly now we ate a flesh hot, salty, and fat. I thanked heaven for Pluck's fresh veggies, his godsend.

My duties continued scantily.

The winds rolled over us like time pressing.

Some days I watched the sea.

The sea was comprised of individual tendrils flowing in cataclysmic symbiosis toward a distance and from a distance, immeasurably. The tendrils wreaked and wove in violent tapestry around and through their neighbors and themselves, beginning and ending someplace none can say. Every movement is a wrapping, and the symbiosis strangles every participant.

Trees in every forest, and people on every space, and the grasses of the flat plains, are equally wrapping, weaving, ripping, strangling. The hidden limbs of the earth, those multitudinous veinings that insinuate through every cubic inch, are equally wrapping, strangling, pushing, forging forth.

It is too awesome a spectacle for folks to appreciate, to understand, and to have inklings of, and so we believe ourselves discrete. It is a single phenomenon.

Days followed days, as I watched this astrology of the earth which was too profoundly vital and too immense to comprehend. And yet I was permitted to be a witness.

And the days followed the days.

Doctor Equanimous and Captain Sanctuary, and I, many mornings would visit the forecastle. Carefully the Doctor's fingers would prowl through his clothing for little beasties, and always he would find some.

Captain Sanctuary and I were free men, relatively speaking, and seldom felt the need. Bugs and insects had no use for us, and left us alone, blessedly. Possibly we smelled bad, and what is a scent but the promise of a taste?

Sometimes the Doctor would then suggest a variation in our diet, and I suspect he enjoyed our tinned flesh as little as I did. Curiously enough, the ship had no fishing poles, so we improvised satisfactorily, and always I prayed for tuna.

As you have observed, prayers are seldom answered in a voice capable of being heard by humans, and commonly before too much time had elapsed we had on board some one of Neptune's great thumping steeds, and it would be wrestled and hammered and spiked and gutted, and would get et.

Frequently this debacle occurred, and every time it did occur each of us acted like it was a new idea freshly dropped upon us through the winds. We played many innocent painless games to beguile the tedium.

It is no wondrous thing that most sailors choose not to fish, for on a long tedious journey it is kindest to oneself if any unnecessary anticipations are avoided, and so sailors commonly prefer to eat the same foods every day.

Endlessly the sailors watched the sea, and to common unimaginative fellows it appears identical and meaningless day after day, because it is a reflection of the mind. Eccentrically these men might see the promise of visions and visitations, but they would see the promise only, and never see the visions and visitations.

The sea was only the sea, and it followed itself as it had preceded itself, endlessly...

Days followed the days endlessly.

Some mornings I woke to doleful yelpings, and I knew the Skipper was thrashing his dog, Cerberus, and I knew he held in his hands a sturdy belt and he held it by its buckle, probably, and his mighty arms were swinging like the arms of a windmill, and blood was not flowing, probably.

I do not believe the dog ever understood the excuses adopted by Captain Sanctuary, nor could the dog have understood the function of these beatings. Our Captain required such an outburst of pent frustrations, as every beater does, and the dog's misbehavior was used to furnish this outburst its door.

Finally the exercise would be done, and the dog would slink sway to lick his wounds and his balls, awash in self-pity and self-loathing, and the master also..

What I intend when I mention the tendrilous configuration of our individual humanities, and of every corollary existence, is that we as the members of a species are extensions of our genetic lineage or stranding which travel extensively throughout all planetary lives. We are individual starpoints on these gyrating tendrils that reach and grope through the millennia and the species of our cosmic awakenings. We are spots on our genetic wanderings as the galaxies are compromised beyond the reach of innocence.

This was true of the dog, and of the man also.

I could never trust anybody who did not enjoy gossip

Our passing had become quite warm, almost sultry, and in the evenings that great beating heart of the sun more cooly desisted its hammerings. In these evenings, being rampant with leisure, we would carry lamps and we would stroll the decks gathering flying fish for our breakfast. Always we would gather, and the amiable Pluck would later cook, enough fish for anybody who might want one.

Some of the men did like fish, and some of the men wished merely to ingest that nutritionally marvelous flesh, especially after the nippings of the night before. Men who sleep alone, and men who pretend to sleep alone, do tend sometimes to indulge at the glass, and since, in this monstrous hulk of a ship, individual berths had been provided for every body who might want one, such habits were allowed to occur.

Women and men are head and hat, and civilization without women was sufficiently difficult to achieve without burdening the men with the humiliation of being observed continuously. Thus, the remarkable civility happening on the ship had been a choice deliberately made by its masters. Everybody appreciated it, everyday.

It was hot as we approached the tropics, and it was hard to get clean. Commonly I would wake at 6, to the sounds made by the men washing the deck, using their massive hoses. This was my signal to come clean.

Wrapped in a towel big as a bedspread I'd leave my cabin and pad to the engines where a barrel had been filled with scald from the boiler. A faucet had been rigged with a screen and I would stand as the wash doused me. It was no easy thing not to shriek but I was resolute in my civility.

Next, I would pad, or scamper, upon the deck and the hands would blast me with those massive hoses as I rotated. Always this would be to an accompaniment of jocular remarks by the hands, and commonly these remarks were very indelicately jocular.

I remember once when Pluck, our Cook, our enormously great-bellied Cook, was performing this roundward ritual to a universal glee, and his great belly was bouncing alarmingly, and the men joked that he was pregnant with a baby elephant and that if one looked very very closely one could see its trunk hanging out. I suspect that Pluck had heard this joke before, once or twice, and yet he understood his shipmates had no malice and he laughed heartily along with his torturers.

"But can you see its ears?" one of them asked laughingly.

Played once, twice, or thrice, it was a good joke, and yet I suspected it had been performed so frequently that its value as entertainment had petered out somewhat.

One day the Doctor and I were arguing amiably about some stupifying meaningless trifle, such as how much the earth would weigh if it were stacked upon itself, an identical object, and Captain Sanctuary approached us and asked for our considered opinions concerning when we might reasonably expect to see the coast.

Of course, he was sharping us, since he knew the answer far better than either of us did, but we played along. What it came down to, of course, was that he bet each of us a pound of tobacco. I had no more use for tobacco than a mouse for a toupee, but soon I had to buy a block of it from myself, the Purser. Our captain was a gambler.

As we entered the river estuary it was a new experience for me, and that day it was as if I were experiencing 2 whole dawnings. First, the sun rolled out from under us and the day began with an appearance of lightfall, and then the liquid emerald of jungle rolled its wild splendors to my view.

Of course at first I had the attitude of the immortals who only watch our finite goings on, without deigning as participants, but with the passing of novelty I understood I was a participant. I was no longer a tacit chorus.

I was grateful for this vision though I could not keep it. And soon we anchored.

Soon, in tropical time, a launch bobbed alongside our ship, and our political formalities began. The customs officer was a strutting swaggering fellow, pretty and perfumed, confident as Valentino.

The Doctor and I proposed going ashore, and he hid his treasures carefully, and he locked his door. I chid him for such an inhospitable incivility and in my self-consciously superior civility quite ostentatiously I placed my favorite huntingknife on my blankets and my door ajar.

The Doctor patted my cheeks and said he loved babies. I was monumentally unruffled and dignified, and I told him he was a sour old fool.

We hopped aboard the launch and rode the mile of soft water. Still feeling definably superior, I thought I handled myself excellently like an old sea dog. I felt exquisitely graceful, from ship, to boat, to dock.

White buildings were the town, with red roofs, and broad-leaved trees dropping with fruit. People were dark, and poached by rains and sun. Noise was loud, the sound of rivers and of equatorial emotions.

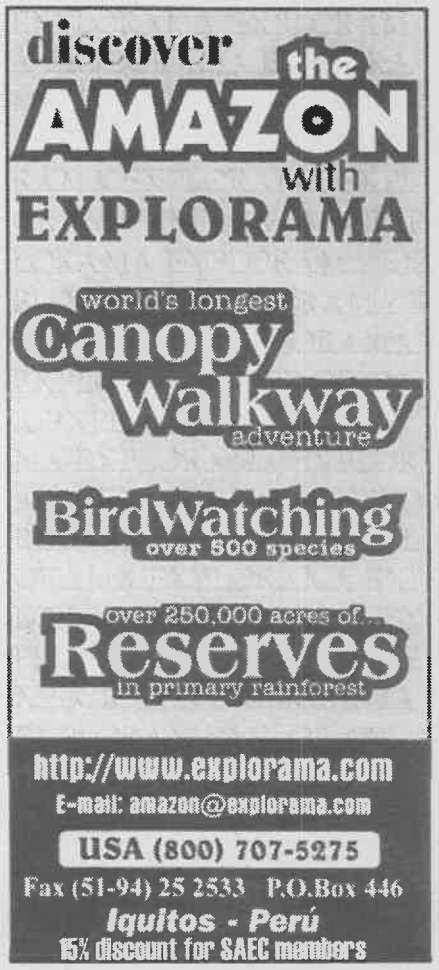
A yankee hustler, scalawag or carpetbagger, invited us for quinine splashed on gin, on his veranda. Some men live among their individual days, and some among their decades, and some among the millennia or so, and this man appeared to slide rootlessly among them all.

He told us a story.

He told us to notice the jungle was watching us and closing in on us. It hedges everything, he said, and it closes everything, and it knows.

He said that somewhile back an assertive little man came to the town through the jungle, claiming he had found a cache left by the conquistadors, of emeralds set in patterns of gold. This assertive little man wanted a mule-train to haul out his find. He was as unpleasant as he could be, and sorry to behold.

A man with a small man's complex is only



Our Cook, Pluck, bought a baby ocelot which immediately ran up into that forest of bales and bundles to play with the rats. Everybody knows that cats are bad luck on ships, and yet he bought it anyway, and it was the cutest kitten I ever saw. I did not think it was time to tell him that venerable joke, that one way to titillate an ocelot was to oscillate its tit a lot, but I figured I'd get around to it.

I am a patient fellow.

Soon the kitten had the run of the ship and we became close pals. One day I found a freshly killed rat on my pillow, but I just tossed it overboard and turned the pillow over. I figured the flies would find that blood pretty soon, so I washed the pillow and the pillowcase the following morning.

One day we hauled aboard a businessman's herd of cattle, long-horned beasts with thick necks. A crane was elbowed over the water and a noose was dropped around the cattle's necks, one at a time, and they were swung aboard. I'd guess there were maybe 80 of them.

Every day on the river as I glanced along the riverbanks I saw the villagers' livestock, and in the individual hovels along the banks. Often pigs and chickens lived under the stilted dwellings, and goats and llama moved in the open spaces. Frequently the owners cracked the forward ankles as a means of hobbling the beasts inexpensively, and I could see the beasts stumping about on their 2, and 2 halfs, legs.

I was rattled by the sight.

But the jungle did move in the clearings every night, and the river was a jungle in itself. The sucuruja was not a phantom from exaggerated myths, and piranhas and gators poked about, and there were cats to marvel at.

Soon, so to speak, we were where the Amazon meets the Madeira, and that is a broad expanse. The sun was reflected as widely as it had been reflected when we were on the sea, and as sharply. And yet by the sight of the jungle we knew this was a river and was not the sea, as we rolled upward toward the Andes.

I fancied the jungle resembled a god who had appeared in our dreams and had strengthened his communication until the dream dissipated and the god remained.

Floating islands and half-submerged trees continued to pass us in their escape to the sea. Wildlife road on these moving lands.

Mosquitoes were prevalent. The Doctor said, "Here are mosquitoes big enough to carry a man off," and he was not wholly kidding. Every day every man took his quinine, in gin or not. Some men neglected to tuck themselves securely in their cots, leaving a gap in the netting, and they paid dearly.

The Doctor now fancied himself an entomologist, and asked me to help. "Some bugs bite and some bugs do not bite," I told him, "and I prefer those bugs who do not bite.

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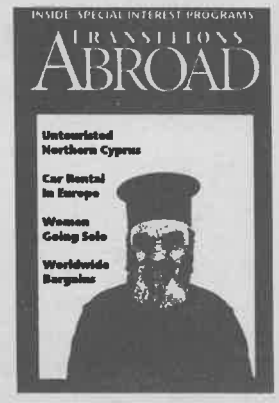

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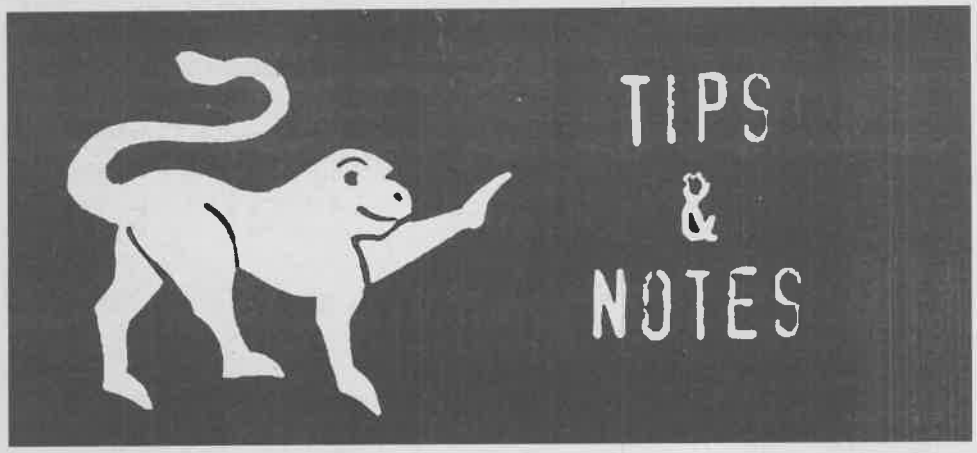

Magazine Distribution

It used to be we published enough to send a magazine to all members, subscribers, and advertisers, and an extra hundred or so to keep around in the cat barn for people who wanted back issues.

So, since it doesn't cost that much more to print up another 1000 magazines or so, why not we thought ask our members to spread a few around to let more people know about the club?

Spread the magazine around where? Well, your local library, for starters. Maybe a school or two. Some colleges have travel assistance associations—one or two dropped off there would be nice. These are good ideas. Bad ideas are probably Greyhound stations, laundromats, seedy bars, and retirement homes.

Anyway, advise if you could help with this project. It's the least you can do for your club.

Explorer Quest 2000

How would you like to spend your next vacation running around a third world country with minimal information, at great risk to yourself, competing with hundreds of others in a scavenger hunt that might not cover your hospital and other expenses even if you win it?

Sound good? Then you'll want to cancel your cruise reservations right away and contact Explorer Quest 2000. Even if you don't find the proposition irresistible, you'll be fascinated by the details.

So, here's how it goes. You and up to three others find your way to Mexico by August 3, 2000. Assuming you get there on time, you hand over $400 to somebody who'll be there to receive it. That person will give you some clues so you can take part in the quest. Is this dangerous? You bet your bum, if you don't know what you're doing, but so what? Think of the adventure! Now, with your clues, you head off to find objects and other things that will help you find more things that will eventually lead you to whatever you have to do to get back to Guadalajara, cross the finish line, and win the $6000 first prize. Arrive a little late? No matter. Come in second and you collect the $4000 second prize. Even later? The third prize is $3000, and there's even a fourth prize of $2000. Arrive after that? Well, all is not lost. No matter what, you can count on a nifty looking "certificate of participation" that you can show your pals in the bar if you get back.

Not bad, huh?

Questions? Of course you have questions! Let us answer the first one. The *South American Explorer* has absolutely nothing to do with this scheme, so don't even think of suing us if anything goes wrong.

On the other hand, if you do go, we would certainly like a fulsome trip report on what possessed you to participate, what happened, and how much you won.

The Explorer Quest 2000 people can be reached at www.explorerquest.com.

Working at the Clubhouses

We've been around long enough now so that some of the early members must be going through mid-life crises, thrashing around, buying sports cars, thinking of replacing loyal mates, and generally looking for meaning in their lives.

This is the time to think about devoting long hours for low pay at one of the SAE clubhouses in South America. Are there actually jobs available? Well, we're not sure. Things change, just like your life changed and put you in a position to even consider such a wacko leap into poverty.

Still, if the above describes you, you might want to contact the Quito, Lima, and Cusco clubhouses and submit a résumé. This will give you time to contemplate the rashness of the deed and ponder whether you're truly up to such folly at your advanced age.

There are advantages, of course. You'll most likely be talking to a lot of people years younger than you are who will have to listen to you because you have the information they need. You'll also be able to travel a bit, beef up your stock of war stories, get in an adventure or two, and shock your kids, before you buy the farm.

Think about it.

String Theory

You played cat's cradle as a kid, right? Well, then you know string figures are designs formed from a loop of string. Who invented them and why? No one knows for sure. String figures are found in Asia, Australia, Africa, the Arctic, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands. Some string designs are believed to be ancient, dating back to the Stone Age, where cave families whiled away many happy hours with nothing more than a length of mammoth gut. Early string figure favorites were the rock, the stick, the bone, and the club. A few centuries later, they came up with the wheel.

Are you looking for a cheap hobby, a way to amuse your friends, an icebreaker at cocktail parties, or an unusual come-on? If so, you'll want to join the International String Figure Association (ISFA).

The primary goal of the ISFA is to gather, preserve, and distribute string figure knowledge so that future generations will continue to enjoy this ancient pastime. They also encourage the invention of new string figures and enjoy sharing them with one another. No strings attached.

International String Figure Association

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For Cuy Eyes Only

The next time you visit the clubhouse in Cusco, look around and think, "If it weren't for the Illustrious Order of the Cuy, there wouldn't be a clubhouse at all!"

The success of the secret society of Cuy boggles the mind. Within months of being founded, the Order met its goal of funding the Cusco clubhouse and more. At this point, it might have disbanded, but no. Cuy members, pumped up by such a stupendous success, were already looking around for new worlds to conquer, new clubhouses to found, good deeds to perform. Cuy members were meeting at secret locations all over the world to discuss matters of Cuy importance, such as establishing Cuy lodges, designing appropriate Cuy attire, insignia, and possible Cuy distinctions, e.g. Master Cuy, Grandmaster Cuy, and other titles too secret to be divulged in these pages. Also, we can reveal to those Cuy who may not know yet that four new miracles have been attributed to El Cuy and are right now in the process of being authenticated.

Are you a Cuy? Would you like to meet other Cuy? Well, as you know, it's a secret society, and we cannot give out addresses. Still, we can tell you this: From our own experience, if you want to meet Cuy, go to upscale places where Cuy would be apt to hang out, and make the Cuy sign. You'd be surprised. The other day, at the Stork Club, a Cuy reported sitting at the end of the bar. After surreptitiously flashing the ultra-secret Cuy sign, two of the most of the attractive women in the room responded. Similar successes have been reported from Rome, Sydney, and Haifa. Also, if you're a genuine Cuy, we know you'll find a way.

Their mission accomplished, the Cusco clubhouse financially secure, the universal Cuydom will almost certainly come up with another project worthy of their munificence. When it does, you will read about it here.

For those of you who are not Cuy and are reading this anyway, you needn't feel totally left out. If you act now, you, too, can be a Cuy. See our web site for details: www.samexplo.org.

Bogus Book Winner

Looking back, it was probably just too easy. In the first Bogus Book Contest, we got all sorts of bad guesses. There was actually someone who thought *101 Spanish Verbs* was a bogus book. Not in the latest contest, though. Everybody guessed right: *Echo Travel in Latin America America America*, *The Llama Sutra*, and *Geophagy in the Americas*. So, be warned. If there's a third Bogus Book Contest (and you know there will be), it's going to be a lot tougher.

That said, who won the contest? On December 1, 1999 at midnight, in front of the usual unimpeachable witnesses, a blindfolded Pamela reached into the Shipibo pot and drew forth two names by accident, one of which (probably yours) had to be put back in the pot. The other was submitted by the lucky Shari Huebner. Shari received a $50 SAE gift certificate and a Latin American music tape. We then repeated the whole process. Once again, Pamela drew out two names, tossed one back (probably yours again), and the winner turned out to be Paul Deaton, who won the much-coveted South American Explorers mystery prize.

Well, that's all, folks. If you were a winner, our hearty congratulations. If not, try your luck with the Great Andean Bean contest on page 30. The prize is even better.

Trip Report Contest

Let's be up front about this and not mince words: Trip reports are getting worse. This is not a new development, but has been unfolding over the years. Still, the fact is most trip reports today are awful, and all too many should never have been written at all.

Now, don't get huffy. There are of course exceptions and, no doubt, your trip report fits the bill. I'm talking about all those other trip reports, and it's not open to argument. They're bad. Bad, bad, bad! Real bad!

Trip reports used to be a lot better. First of all, they were written legibly. Big plus, that—legibility. And then, they were useful. The whole purpose of a trip report is to learn something of value and pass it on to she/he who follows. Good trip reports provide valuable information on mountain routes, places to visit in town, scoundrels to avoid, reliable guides, and well... everything else you'd expect to find in a trip report.

So, enough about the past. What about the future? To encourage, nay, inspire members to rise to their full potential and pen (preferably type [even more preferably, electronically submit]) the model trip report, your club even considered putting money on the line, cash on the barrel head, but on reflection rejected the idea. Still, some sort of reward did seem appropriate.

Let us here announce to one and all that whoever submits the best trip report before June 1, 2000 will be able to see that very trip report published (or parts thereof) in the *SAE* and held up to others as a paragon of trip report writing.

Knowing that countless numbers will want to participate in this contest, we expect to see an almost immediate improvement in trip report quality.

SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORERS

Harry A. Franck

by Daniel Buck

The Prince of Vagabonds, as Harry Alverson Franck was once celebrated, is a bygone writer today. His works clutter the travel-adventure shelves at used-book shops, seldom fetching more than ten or twenty dollars. (Except in Buenos Aires, where his South American volumes can reach $150 per. Argentines will pay a premium price for any English-language book that mentions their homeland.) Anthologies ignore him. He doesn't land a single bon mot in Peter Yapp's *Travellers' Dictionary of Quotation.*

Franck was a young high-school French teacher in Detroit in 1903 when he set aside his texts and took up globe-trotting. In 1910, his first book, *A Vagabond Journey Around the World* was published. Over the ensuing several decades, Franck traveled maniacally and dashed off books like postcards. He overcompensated for any lyrical deficiencies with sheer industry: more than 30 titles about his tramps through almost 100 countries.

Early on, Franck set his wandering eye on Latin America. Inspired by reading Prescott's *The Conquest of Peru*, Franck bid farewell to another high-school teaching job and headed south with the vague notion of hiking the Inca highway. He did a stretch as a policeman in the Canal Zone (the details can be found in his *Zone Policeman 88*) and over the course of the next few years made his way, largely on foot, from Colombia to Argentina. He took a break to serve as a U.S. Army lieutenant in France and Italy during World War I, then returned to Argentina and reversed course, moving north from the River Plate to Venezuela. He wrote up his South American adventure in *Vagabonding Down the Andes* (1917) and *Working North from Patagonia* (1921), two of his best-known volumes.

Why did he walk? "I formed the habit of walking early in life," he wrote, "developing an inability to depend on others for my movements." But he also wanted to break out of his "caste," which he considered "a drag on observant travel." He aspired to "get in touch with the 'common people,' [which] requires actually living in their huts and tramping their roads." As he later told his readers, a little of that goes a long way.

Franck's initial books were well-received. "[A]lmost as refreshing as his journey was novel" said *Saturday Review* of *Vagabond Journey*. The *New Republic* was smitten with Franck's plebeian approach in *Vagabonding Down*: "a fine antidote to the top-hat, frock-coat style of grandiloquence about South America, favored by the chambers of commerce and explorers who keep within a five minute radius of the best hotels in Buenos Aires, Valparaiso, and Rio de Janeiro." But with *Working North*, his account of the return hike, Franck's prolixity was taking its toll on the critics. "He starts his recording machine going," *Literary Review* said, "as a movie operator starts turning his crank, and accepts as it seems, hit or miss, whatever comes along. Of form or selection or sympathetic interpretation, the book has little."

Calling Franck's occasional good writing as "lapses," a second reviewer torpedoed the book, saying it was "geared to quantity-production of standardized goods, [and] its 650 pages are written in a banal and slovenly fashion. One can hear the typewriter pounding without intermission from start to finish. The book is marred, moreover, by its tendency to make odious comparisons between South American civilizations and our own, and by its Anglo-Saxon contempt for the 'frailties' of the Latin race."

A bit harsh. Franck will never rank in the upper tier of literary travel of any era, but he had his moments. "The greatness of Buenos Aires has been mainly thrust upon it," he acutely observed. "Of all the cities of the earth only Chicago grew up with more vertiginous rapidity." His rendering of a resplendently attired Buenos Aires dandy "descending the steps of the far-famed, more than ornate Jockey Club," was perfect, right up to detecting his "aristocratic poise, beneath which lurks a faint hint of the Bowery."

Entering Jaen, Peru, with his donkey Cleopatra, Franck was as shocked by the villagers as they probably were of him:

Occupying a large and distinct place on the map, this provincial "capital" proved to be a disordered cluster of a half-hundred wretched, time-blackened, tumble-down, thatched huts, the roofs full of holes, the gables often missing, scattered like abandoned junk among the weeds and bushes of a half-hearted clearing in the selfsame gloomy forest and spiny jungle that had so long shut me in. The barefoot, half-clothed, fever-yellow inhabitants of mongrel breed stared curiously from their mud doorways as I stalked past, smeared with dried mud from head to foot, sunburned, shaggy with whiskers, and dragging behind me by main force an emaciated donkey trembling with excitement at the unwonted sights, or with fear at the unknown dangers in so vast a metropolis.

The reality had sunk in: one could take this caste-breaking business to the extreme.

As for his social judgments, Franck was writing many decades ago, when sensitivity to the locals was less common. Even so, he was a prince of charity compared to some of his modern counterparts—misanthropes like Paul Theroux or juvenile wits like P.J. O'Rourke.

Franck spent most of the 1920s and 1930s haunting the Far and Middle East. As World War II loomed, Franck, his wife, Rachel, and son Peter, age 10, embarked on a nine-month tour of South America. No walking this time. "Long, long ago I got my readers into the bad habit of expecting me to do most of my traveling on foot," he explained, before dismissing the ambulant life as "boring" and "insufferable." (Rachel undoubtedly had an even more pungent view. She had given birth to three of their five children while accompanying her husband on his wanderings. Their oldest son was born on a tramp freighter off the coast of Colombia.)

The trio journeyed by cruise ship, airplane, and train. A fedora and a three-piece suit dressed the now prosperous vagabond. Franck's account of the trip, *Rediscovering South America* (1943) was his last excursion book. Upon returning home, he saw service as a sixty-something major in the Army Air Corps, winning a Purple Heart. After the war he eased into the life of cruise lecturer, but he couldn't sit still. He bused across the Sahara, then proceeded south by track and river to Cape Town. Franck died in 1962 at age 81 and took one more ride, to Arlington National Cemetery.

Into the woods: "In the Monte Grande, the 'Great Wilderness' of Bolivia, the commander of the first garrison insisted on sending a boy soldier , with an ancient and rusted Winchester to 'protect' me from the savages." (from Vagabonding Down the Andes, by Harry A. Franck, 1917, Garden City Publishing Co., Garden City, New York.)

Quito Club News

When in Quito, do as the Quiteños do. Putting aside any politically correct and pro-animal rights sentiments, several Quito club volunteers set out for the Plaza del Toros during December's Fiestas de Quito. While protesters rallied outside the gates, bulls and matadors battled it out—and the bulls lost, badly. At the end, the arena was awash in blood, sweat, and volcanic ash from Volcano Guagua Pichincha. Needless to say, we do not recommend this event for children!

Interested in seeing Volcano Tungurahua in all its furious splendor? Ask the Quito club! We'll tell you how to get to Patate, across the valley from Baños, by bus and truck. Pitch your tent in the cow pasture, load your camera with film, sit back, and watch. You'll see first-hand Tungurahua's steep slopes, white clouds of ash, and glowing lava, all the while secure in the fact that you're far enough away from danger.

We spent a day improving the Quito club and focused on creating more space for club volunteers to help members, carving out a quiet area for staff to work on special projects, and attacking the dust and ash monsters lurking under and behind everything. We know you'll appreciate the changes!

Tourism in Ecuador is down by at least 50 percent from previous years. With depreciating currency and fewer travelers, keep in mind that Ecuador is an extremely affordable place to visit.

Join us in the new year at our continuing Thursday Night Presentations, every first and third Thursday of the month and also come to our semi annual General Meeting. Be sure to look at the new Volunteer Resource Desk Information, take advantage of the great SAE discounts, and don't forget to help us with the very important handcarries needed between clubs.

Thanks go out to all those members who've kept us stocked with books and coffee! Thanks, too, to author John Pilkington who donated a copy of his *An Englishman in Patagonia* and *An Adventure on the Old Silk Road. Abrazos* to Peter Linder, Bob Silva and the other members who've given their time and contributions to La Tola while they were in Quito.

Lima Club News

Sadly, not one member has responded to our "Tattoo You" campaign ("Club News," Issue 58, 1999). We've established connections with a local bar-*cum*-tattoo and piercing parlor. (Who knows? Soon SAE members may get discounts at this fine establishment!) Enough said. The Lima club is upping the ante: Donate $1000 to the SAE and Lima clubhouse manager Tim Currie will have the beloved SAE butterfly forever emblazoned on his very own skin.

Peru's General Election is slated for April 9, 2000. Incumbent President Alberto Fujimori seems the favorite for a third term in office. Lima Mayor Alberto Andrade, Lossio Castañeda, who revamped Peru's social security system, and Alejandro Toledo, a virtually unknown independent, are serious contenders. Political slogans and propaganda abound. We anticipate a slew of political marches, strikes, demonstrations, and double talk from all sides in the weeks leading up to Election Day. Concerned about how the election may impact your travels in Peru this spring? Check out the SAE web site at www.samexplo.org.

The Lima office bid a fond farewell to our in-house king of the acronym, friend, and co-manager Adam Shoer (mastermind behind both the SAECWYATW program and the "Tattoo You" campaign). With a six-week tour de force at the Cusco clubhouse, Shoer finished up an 11-month stint with the SAE in December. Adam holds the distinction of being the only long-term club employee in living memory to miss his own going away party. His parting words of wisdom: "Grilled cheese and chocolate chip cookies are all you need." Adam has moved back to New York City to pursue life, the universe, and everything. Thank you, Adam, for being there when we needed you the most!

On December 9, 1999, a new park in Lima was dedicated to the 35,000 victims of terrorism. At noon, the entire country observed a minute of silence in memory of the fallen.

Peru's "informal economy" has come under serious attack. Operation Primavera has conducted numerous raids and seizures of pirated and contraband goods valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A happy surprise for those who will be visiting the Lima club this year: We've renovated! The next time you grace our doorways, marvel at the extra space cleared for our map room, admire the freshly painted the walls, ogle the new furniture, riffle through the books in the expanded library, and sip coffee on our new rooftop patio. But let's not stop the improvements there! We'd appreciate donations of books for our library and book exchange. We're also open to suggestions of titles you'd like to see in our library. Also, if you're headed for Lima and have a special interest or area of expertise, please consider giving a presentation at the clubhouse...we would love to have you!

Hearty thanks to all the Lima club volunteers: Holly Hobby, "Duck Tap" endorsee and co-founder of the International Couch Surfing Team; Rachel Peel, whose Lily the Pink impression is unsurpassable; Chris Benway, Muchacha Room Quality Control Technician; Ryan Collins, for reminding us that the Queen is always right; Ian Evans, Painting Crew Guy and Computer Stylist.

Warm fuzzies go out to our handcarriers without whom we could not survive: Lari Johnson, Claire Eydes, Douglas Altshuler, Tim Edgar, Brett Robinson, Chris Gay and Jorg Albrecht.

Feliz Año Nuevo!

Cusco Club News

Thank goodness millennium celebrations are all over for 1,000 years! As expected, we were one of the most popular places for millennium celebrations. You read that right: The SAE clubhouse had over 600 visitors in December, and some of these intrepid explorers even found time to visit Machu Picchu! Life continues on a slightly more normal keel once again. A note to all of the new Doomsday Life Members: Don't forget to renew your memberships, which expired January 1, 2000.

Kit, in the prime of her kitten years, is another entertaining sight in the garden, as she chases flies and eats roses. Thanks so much to members and professional vets Peter O'Brian, Ruth Metcalfe, Ian Hilman and Sally Jones who were around after Kit's neutering was botched by an unqualified vet. They managed to nurse her back to health for us! Thanks also to Paolo Greer for his donation towards paying the huge bills we had because of this mess.

Very special thanks to Thomas Spande who donated money for a water tank and beautiful garden furniture in remembrance of his late wife Connie. Thanks, too, to our packhorse members who cheerfully lug books and maps between the clubs. Finally, thank you to those members who've kept Boz and Caz in coffee and chocolate. Trust us—working with the two of them when they're craving caffeine is hell.

We're planning a birthday party for the Cusco clubhouse on June 1. (Almost a year old already! Can you believe it?) Soon thereafter comes Inti Raymi and the Winter Solstice celebrations. Cusco will certainly be *the* place to be in 2000!

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Where Are They Now?

You won't believe this, but there are actually club members out there who've never heard of Tom Jackson, Lisa Moczyninski, Penny Delay, and Betsy Wagenhauser.

How can this be? Easy. They weren't around back in those early days when men were men and women were women. There are members today who (would you believe it?) think nothing of getting their magazine on time, having their phone calls returned, and actually getting what they ordered, sometimes even on time.

Well, old members know what's what. And what's more, they'd probably like to know what happened to those legendary figures who loomed so large in the early days of club history. That's why we're instituting the new feature "Where Are They Now?" to keep old members informed and edify new members who might not know the pithy details of club history and lore.

If you know the whereabouts of any club luminaries or want to know whatever happened to Petra Schepens, let us know. We'll feature them in an upcoming column. Remember, those who forget the past are forced to relive it, and we wouldn't want *that*.

La Tola

Los Niños Migrantes

by Diana Morris, Quito Clubhouse

explorer@saec.org.ec

La Tola was founded over 20 years ago in Quito, Ecuador by Salesian brothers. It provides shelter for over 400 homeless children and adults. La Tola also runs a program for orphaned and abused boys between 5 and 17.

Thanks to those who donated funds for La Tola projects last year, we served over 950 Christmas meals and distributed cookies, chocolates and candies to 1300 people at La Tola and in two small villages near Quito. We also held a Christmas Party at Diana's house for the boys at La Tola—each child received a pair of shoes, a shirt, personal hygiene items, sweets, and a bit of spending money.

Rodrigo, now 17, has lived at La Tola since he was 6. He returned to Ruminchaqui last year and wanted to give gifts to the 300 children living in his village. We helped him collect and distribute fruit, sweets, and clothing. The children's bright smiles were great rewards for our efforts.

So far, the La Tola volunteer program is a success! We particularly appreciate those who have spent evenings teaching kids in the workshops.

For their support of our work with La Tola, special thanks to Bob Silva, Laura Knotts, Peter Linder, Carol Vallejo, Steve Smith, and Sheldon Selin.

The SAE Quito Clubhouse collects donations and organizes volunteers to participate in nightly activities and monthly outings for La Tola's "Los Niños Migrantes."

Donations can be sent care of the SAE Ithaca office, 126 Indian Creek Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

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Flipside Schoolworks

by Janice Davies, Lima Clubhouse

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Flipside Schoolworks, founded by Lima Clubhouse managers Janice Davies and Tim Currie and SAE member Andy Davies, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving education and quality of life in developing communities.

Flipside Schoolworks' first major project is an early childhood education center for an impoverished community on the outskirts of Lima. When completed, the school will teach 75 to 100 children between the ages of three and six basic health, hygiene, and social skills. After regular school hours, the center will offer English classes and Adult Education. Any financial contributions to help us construct the school by March 31, 2000 will be greatly appreciated!

If you would like more information about Flipside Schoolworks or if you'd like to make a donation, please e-mail montague@amauta.rcp.net.pe or schoolworks@yahoo.com. Also, visit our website at www.flipsideschoolworks.ab.ca.

Leishmaniasis

Q: My son came back from the jungle in Bolivia with a large sore that wouldn't heal. One doctor thinks it's leishmaniasis. Can you tell me more about it?

A: New World (American) cutaneous leishmaniasis is present in rural forest and jungle areas of Central and South America and a small part of south Texas. It has many local names and manifestations, e.g., *chiclero* ulcer in the Yucatan, Belize and Guatemala, *uta* in Peru, or *pian bois* in the Guyanas and the Amazon Basin. Visceral (internal organ) leishmaniasis, also called *kala-azar*, is endemic in many countries around the world including Central America, Brazil, Venezuela, and Paraguay.

There are 4 disease types: (1) Cutaneous leishmaniasis is a skin ulcer that takes 6 months to many years to heal. (2) Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis is skin ulcers that spread along the lymphatic system. This disease usually manifests as nasal septum redness, swelling and ulceration that slowly extends to the palate, pharynx and larynx. Occasionally other mucosal sites such as the anus may be involved. The mutilating destruction of soft tissues can involve cartilage but not bone. This mucosal disease is progressive and can be fatal; in severe forms it is called espundia. (3) Diffuse cutaneous leishmaniasis involves hundreds of skin lesions, and the immune system is unresponsive in fighting the infection. (4) Visceral leishmaniasis has a skin nodule that develops where a sandfly bite occurred. The nodule often resolves in the 2 to 6 months it takes the systemic symptoms to develop. These include high fever, chills, liver and spleen enlargement, and if untreated gradual wasting away. Time to death if untreated varies, but may average 8 months.

Q: Where does the name come from?

A: It is named after the British physician Colonel Leishman who in 1903 with Colonel Donovan noted a parasite in soldiers afflicted with Dumdum Fever from their India tour of duty and recognized that the organism caused the disease. Later that year the parasite was named Leishmania donovani. Others had previously noted the existence of the parasite. In 1885 British surgeon Major Cunningham saw the organisms in a patient with "Delhi boil," and Russian Army physician Borovsky confirmed this in 1898. Because many American soldiers contract the disease when they are in endemic areas, leishmaniasis is well known among career military physicians.

Q: What causes leishmaniasis?

A: Protozoa of the genus *Leishmania* cause the disease. In the Americas, the cutaneous forms are caused by about 8 species that are divided into three types: *L. braziliensis, L. guyanesis,* and *L. mexicana*. The primary cause of visceral leishmaniasis in the Americas is *L. chagasi*.

Q: How is it transmitted?

A: Various species of the sandfly (genus Lutzomyia) feed on animals that harbor the protozoa. The protozoa then go through part of their life cycle in the sandfly, multiply in the sandfly's gut, and migrate to the sandfly's mouthparts to infect humans when the sandfly bites. The major animal reservoir for American cutaneous leishmaniasis is the rodent, sloth, anteater, dog, and marsupial. The major reservoir for visceral leishmaniasis is the dog, fox, and opossum. Studying the habits of the local sandfly responsible for disease transmission, and the animal reservoir in the area, will often give clues to local public health officials that explain transmission patterns.

Q: How do we find out for sure if my son has it?

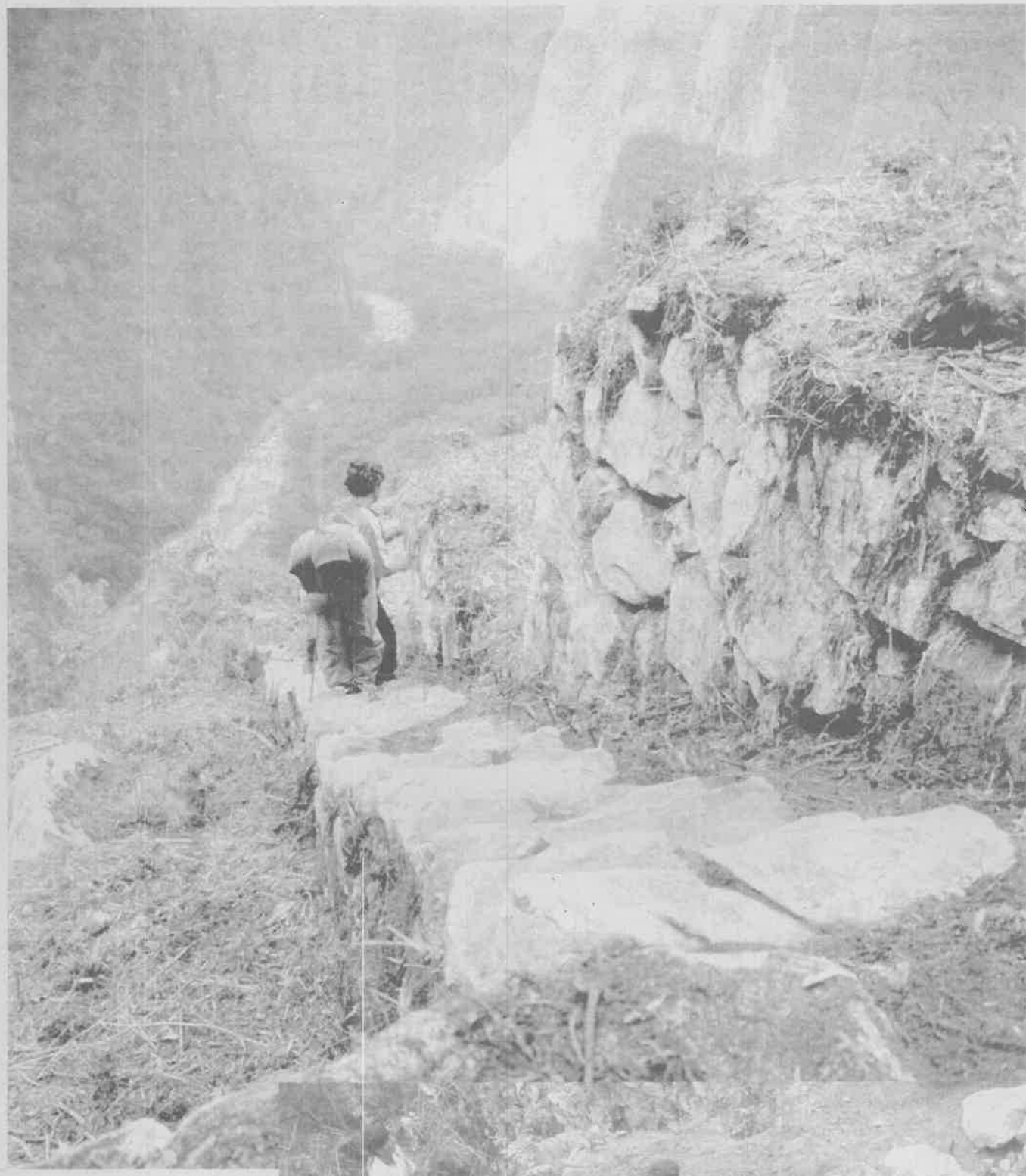
A: People who have been in an area where leishmaniasis is endemic and who have the typical signs and symptoms noted above should be suspicious. Your doctor can do some simple blood tests for anemia, low white count, and a high IgG level to see if it is consistent with leishmaniasis. The leishmanin or Montenegro skin test can detect leishmaniasis 2 to 3 months after infection. However, the test has yet to be approved by the FDA, so it may be difficult to get in the US. A definitive diagnosis usually requires a skin or bone marrow biopsy. Newer tests (ELISA, IFA, and PCR) are now available in some centers, but it is not yet clear if they can replace a tissue biopsy.

Q: How would he be treated if he has the disease?

A: Intravenous sodium stibogluconate (SSG) is used for 20 days for cutaneous leishmaniasis. It is considered an investigational new drug given only under protocol in the US. Liposomal amphotericin B (also given intravenously) is the only FDA approved drug for visceral leishmaniasis. Your doctor will likely consult with either the CDC or an infectious disease specialist in working out the exact treatment regimen. Other drugs are being investigated, but none have been shown to be as efficacious. You can search www.cdc.gov and www.fda.gov for the latest information.

Q: I'm headed down to the jungle myself next year. How can I prevent getting leishmaniasis?

A: Avoid being bitten by sandflies. Use insect repellant, wear pants and long-sleeve shirts treated with permethrin, and hang a fine-mesh netting over your sleeping area. Sandflies are not strong fliers, so fans can be helpful in keeping them away from you. Be especially meticulous during the late evening and early morning, when sandflies feed. Avoid places where sandflies breed: dark, damp places, hollow trees, semi-dry riverbeds, animal burrows, etc.



We look at the trail and admire the genius of the Incas who built it.

Below: Fountains 3 and 4, with the staircases in the foreground and the viewing platform to the right.

Above: View of the Urubamba River from a side stairway off the main Inca trail.

Statistics of the recently discovered Inca Trail from Machu Picchu to the Urubamba River:

Slope Length	1,800 meters
Planemetric Length	1,450.9 meters
Point-to-Point Distance	950 meters
Average Slope	35 percent
Typical Width	1.8 meters
Maximum Width	3 meters
Number of Fountains	4
Number of Terrace Groups	4
Number of Rest Stops	5

The Lost Inca Trail

Kenneth R. Wright & Ruth M. Wright

For thirty years, Dr. Alfredo Valencia, resident archaeologist at Machu Picchu, was convinced that there had to be another, more elaborate Inca trail from Machu Picchu to the Urubamba River. All the known entrances leading down from the royal estate of Pachacuti were either too narrow, too skimpy, insufficiently imposing, or somehow not quite right.

In 1969, when Dr. Valencia was a student, a forest fire raged across the eastern flank of Machu Picchu, burning away large sections of a dense mat of trees and shrubs that covered the slope all the way down to the Urubamba. It was a lucky break for Dr. Valencia to see what lay under the forest canopy. At the time, he noted several fountains among the ashes, but did not record their exact locations. As for a major Inca trail from Machu Picchu, he saw none. Before long, dense vegetation covered the eastern flank once more.

In 1998, Ken Wright and a hand-picked team of engineers and surveyors were winding up their fourth year of a project to survey and map the hydrological works of Machu Picchu. Dr. Valencia was the project archaeologist. This was an opportunity to investigate the ruins seen by Dr. Valencia thirty years ago. Wright Water Engineers obtained a permit from the Institute of Culture (INC). The objective was straightforward enough—to identify, clear, excavate, and document the fountains.

In September, under the direction of Wright and Valencia, *macheteros* (machete-wielding Quechua Indians, descendants of the Inca) cut through the thick vegetation. Sometimes hitting rocks, they pull away the matted vines completely covering Inca stonework. Little by little, stone stairways, terraces, and the long-lost fountains reappear.

Two of the fountains are the equal of the beautifully crafted ones along the Stairway of the Fountains up in Machu Picchu. Once we clear the fountains of 400 years of accumulated debris and dirt, we watch as the water flows once again—cool, clear and refreshing.

Over the next two weeks, the *macheteros* strip away growth and dirt to uncover a flat ledge. To the south of the two fountains, we find a granite stairway three meters wide and, surprisingly, a trail 125 meters long with a finely built retaining wall. Alone, this trail might not mean much, but the two fountains, the terraces, the imposing granite staircase, *and* the well-constructed trail signal to Valencia and Wright that this is no ordinary find. The grandeur of the setting, the ceremonial nature of the fountains, the impressive quality of the work—everything signals that this is, without a doubt, the primary Inca trail from Machu Picchu that for three decades Dr. Valencia has imagined must exist. We measure and document the finds, clean and sweep the great staircase. The trail is in remarkable condition. Indeed, with little work, we can see what it must have looked like at the height of the Inca Empire.

On the last day, we cut our way down along the Huayna Picchu cliff toward the Urubamba below. This has to be the way down, but it looks impassable. As the *macheteros* slash away, we spot a huge pheasant in the trees. Further on, a poisonous snake lies coiled just off our path. At length, we reach an ancient terrace some 150 meters above the Urubamba. Here, the trail veers sharply left, sloping downward along the bottom of the sheer cliff formed by the Huayna Picchu geologic fault.

Slowly and laboriously, we make our way down the cliff. Here and there an Inca stone wall shows we're still following the general trail route. From below we can faintly hear the Urubamba. For a while we lose the trail altogether. Then, climbing down a gully for 20 meters, we come upon a flowing spring by a stone wall, heavily overgrown and barely visible. Inca walls line both sides of the gully. From here, the Urubamba roars, and we catch fleeting glimpses of the river nearly straight down through the canopy of trees.

this is no ordinary find.

Lo and behold, further down the steep gully, we come across a granite staircase complete with a drainage channel leading down to the water. At the river's edge are stone walls. By some miracle they have survived the effects of four and a half centuries of floods. Here, the trail ends. Fording the Urubamba River, we look back at the trail and admire the genius of the Incas who built it.

We will be back next year.

The Fountains

Our original purpose was to excavate the five fountains on the lower slope of Machu Picchu.

In form and structure, Fountains 3 and 4 are similar to those at Phuyu-patamanca, Sayacmarca, Wiñay Wayna and Machu Picchu in their use of walk-in enclosures, niches, the approach channel, a spurting jet, and a stone basin below. A narrowing of the water channel is a special feature of both Fountains 3 and 4. Such narrowing causes the flowing water to speed up and spurt forth with greater force. This fact demonstrates that Inca engineers appreciated the mechanics of water flow and took pains to enhance the operation of the two fountains during periods of low flow. Finally, to guard against overflow in rainy periods, the Incas built a fork above Fountain 4 to divert excess water into a stone conduit that spills into an adjacent drainage channel.

Above the fountains, a beautifully constructed 14-step granite staircase leads up to a platform. Here the travelers could rest and enjoy the magnificent view of the spectacular triangular summit of Yanantin Peak, perfectly framed by Putucusi Mountain on the right and Huayna Picchu on the left. The mighty roar of the Urubamba River below heightens this awesome natural spectacle.

Since Fountains 1 and 2 lack falling jets of water and are not aesthetically remarkable, we label them "utilitarian." Nevertheless, both are notable engineering achievements—functional, reliable, and well situated. Nearby, we find the ruins of three stone structures, quite likely habitation for field workers. We also excavate a "long house" between Fountains 1 and 2, which may have served as sleeping quarters for several dozen workers and as a storehouse for grain. Fountain 1 appears to have been damaged long ago by a rock fall, but the well-built walls on the north and west side survived.

Fountain 5, we find, has two unusual features. The first is a water tunnel 0.8 meters wide and over 1 meter high with a slab roof of cut granite. This tunnel penetrates 2.8 meters into the hillside, but a conduit that extends outside the hill was smashed by a rock fall. The second unusual feature is a walled-in cave above the tunnel. When excavated, we found it filled with earth and stones nearly to the roof. Alas, poisonous snakes at Fountain 5 kept us from investigating further.

1999 Trail Excavations

Our 1998 Inca trail work was unfinished. We had located Dr. Valencia's five fountains and restored three fountains to working order. We had found the general route of the lower half of the main trail from Machu Picchu and surveyed the geometric terraces surrounding the five fountains—impressive feats of building with their massive corners and "flying stairways." These are strategically placed stones cantilevered out from the terrace walls to form a staircase so that you

***KEN WRIGHT** is a consulting engineers in Denver with Wright Water Engineers, where he handles water problems for numerous clients including Exxon, Coors Brewery, and Vail. Besides Machu Picchu, he hold two permits for paleohydrology studies at Mesa Verde National Park.*

***RUTH WRIGHT** is a natural resources attorney, a former Colorado legislator, and House Minority Leader. She serves on the board of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. She is an award winning photographer with a love for ancient history and the cultures of early Americans.*

Above: Dr. Alfredo Valencia, Ives Bejar, machetero Pablo Escalanto, and Ken Right on the 14-step stairway connecting the two ceremonial fountains to the viewing platform. Left: The grandeur of the setting, the impressive quality of the work—everything signals that this is the primary Inca trail from Machu Picchu.Below: Aerial view of the newly discovered Inca Trail from Machu Picchu to the Urubamba River.

Earth mother, beautiful mother, do not let the fountains go dry.

can get from one terrace to the next. Well and good, but we still had to locate the upper part of the trail and clean up the lower half to connect "our" section with Machu Picchu and the river. For this, we needed another permit, which Sr. Gustavo Manrique, Director of the Cusco INC, enthusiastically authorized.

In September 1999, warmly welcomed by Mayor José Soto of the Municipal District of Machu Picchu, and his Vice Mayor, Fermín Diaz, we get to work. We split our crew of thirteen, including eight experienced *macheteros*. Half start on top at Machu Picchu near the long granite staircase in Conjunto 13. This was cleared by Hiram Bingham in 1912. The other half will work up from the river below. A vertical distance of 1,600 feet separates the two crews. At the same time, we conduct a survey from the river so we can accurately plot the trail on a map.

The crews keep in touch by radio. On September 17, this proves a godsend. Just across the Urubamba River, two trains collide head-on in the fog with such force that one engine is thrown on top of the other. Deputy Archeologist Ives Béjar reports the accident by radio to Peruvian security. Within a minute help is on the way. Sr. Béjar also uses the radio to report a rare Spectacled Bear he sees along the trail. On the first day, we report all the poisonous snakes we encounter, but by the second day, we've come across so many that they hardly rate notice.

Closing Ceremony

The trail is cleared and mapped from top to bottom. Our work at Machu Picchu is over. After many memorable years, we're almost ready to leave. But there is still one thing we have to do. Our loyal *macheteros* have requested a ceremony to honor the earth mother.

Florencio Almiro Dueñas leads the ceremony. Pouring wine into the fountain and on the spout where the water falls from the terrace wall, he intones in Quechua:

"Today, having finished our excavations at Machu Picchu next to this water fountain, I call to the spirits of the Gods of Machu Picchu, Putucusi, Intipunko and Mandor. Here is Pachamama - Earth mother, beautiful mother, do not let the fountains go dry; every year water must flow forth so that we can drink. I am going to give you wine to drink."

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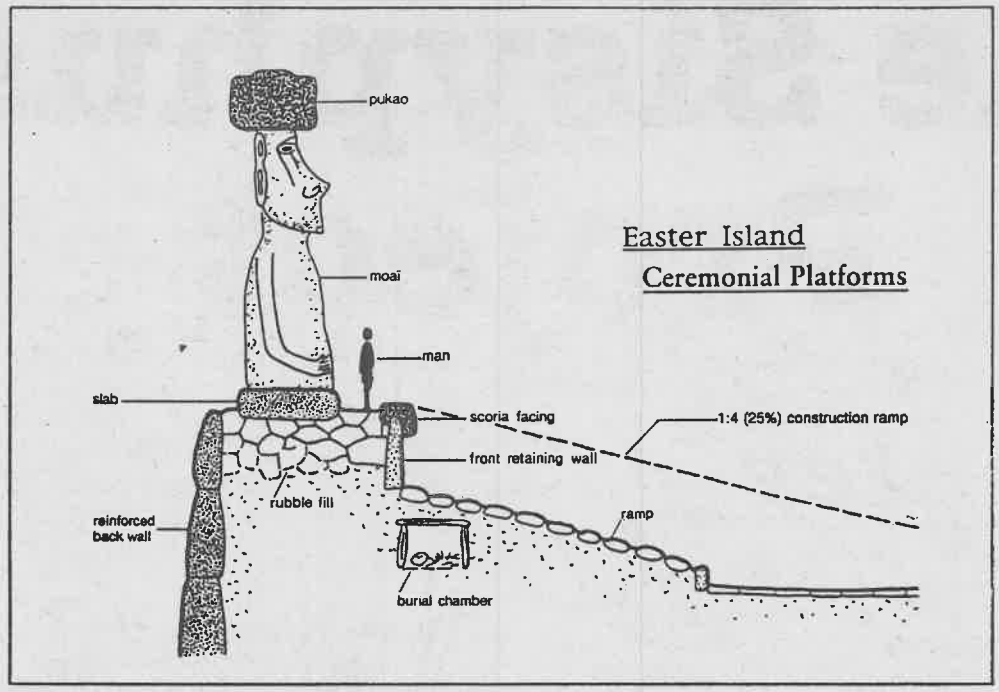
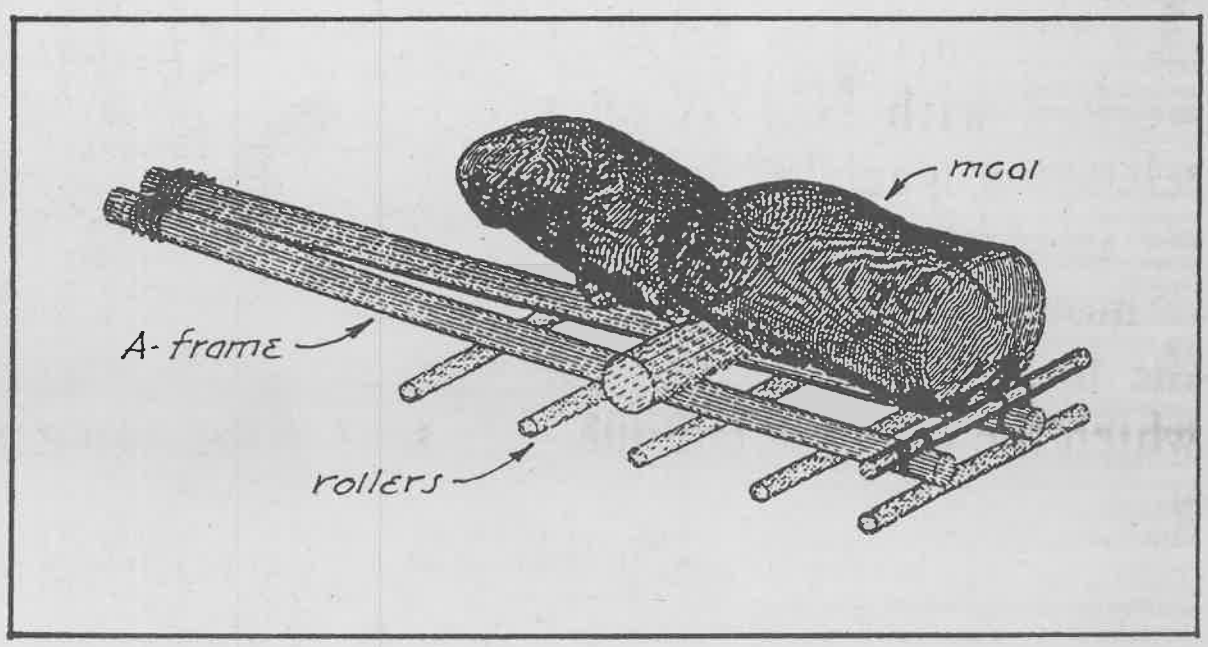
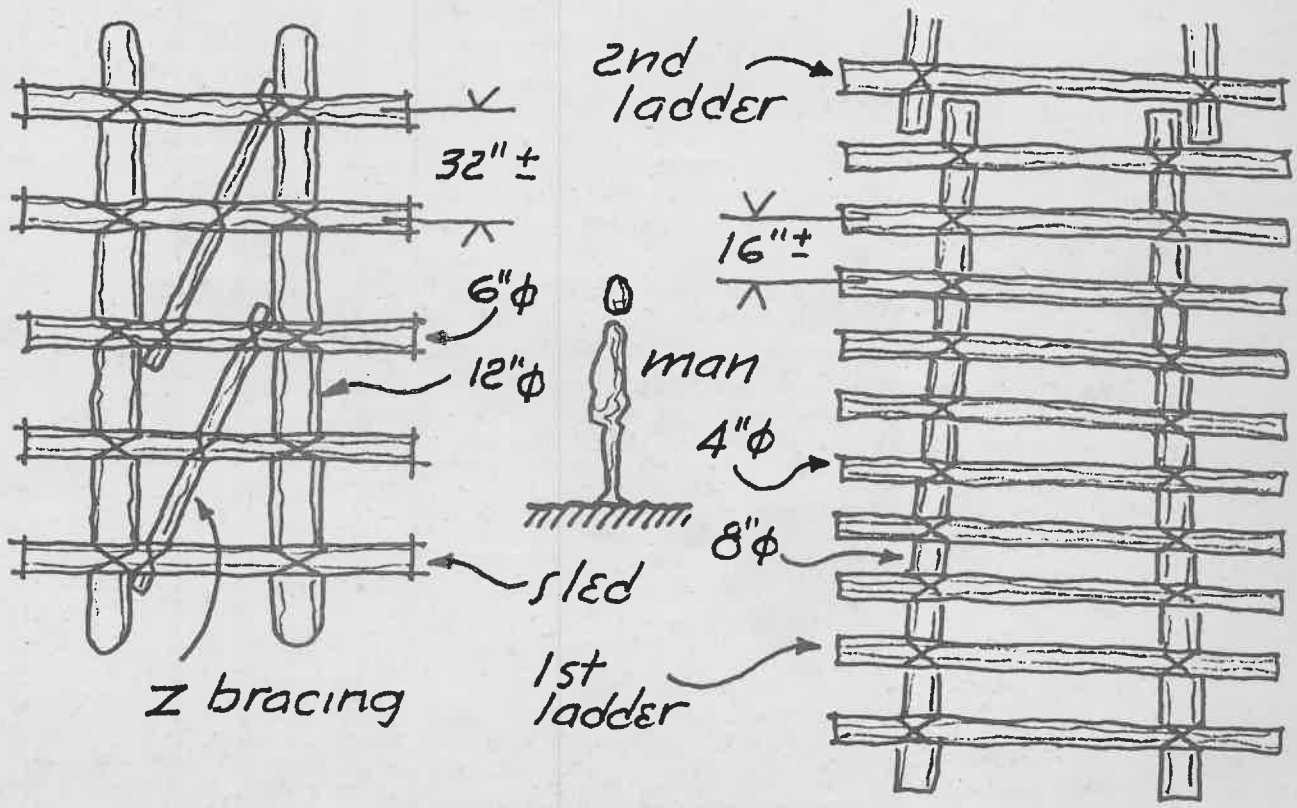


Cross section of typical ahu with moai and pukao

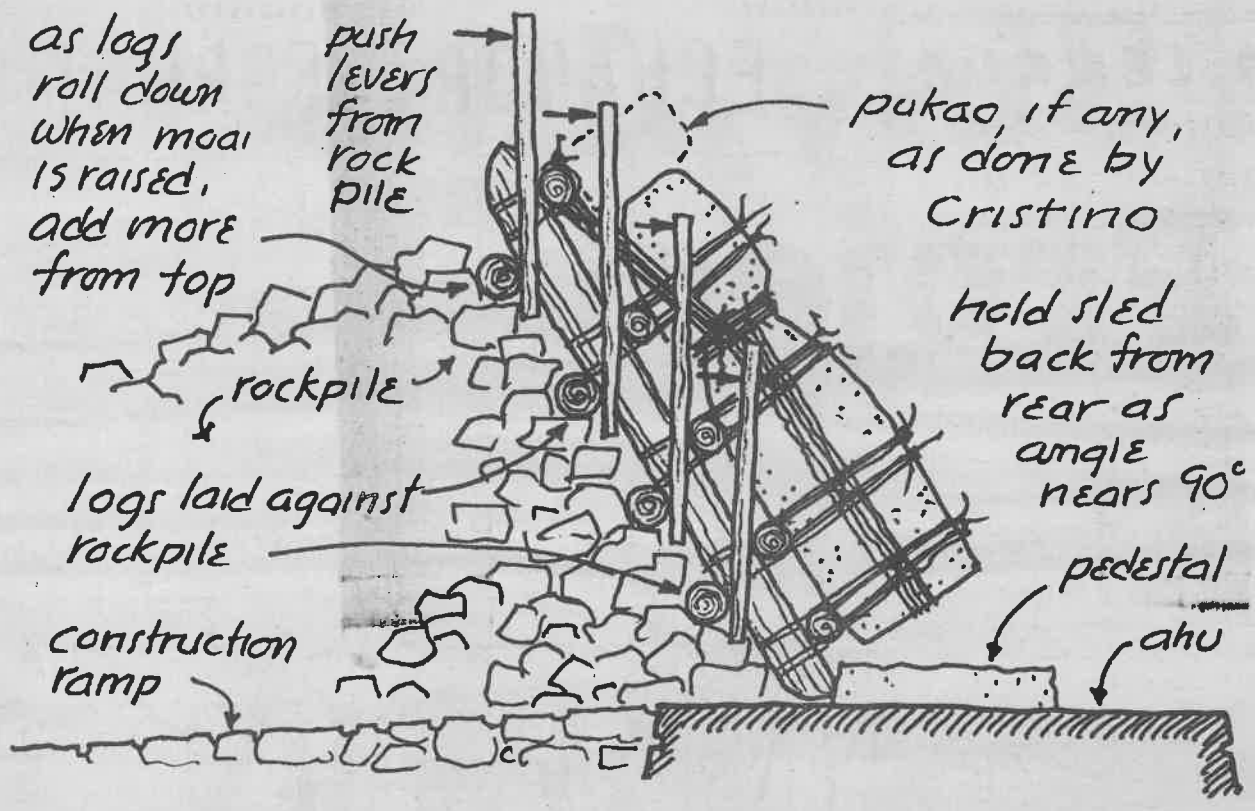
We did everything wrong.



A-frame sled on rollers with moai in prone position



Plans of proposed sled and slider ladders


as logs roll down when moai is raised, add more from top
push levers from rock pile
pukao, if any, as done by Cristino
hold sled back from rear as angle nears 90°
rockpile
logs laid against rockpile
pedestal
ahu
construction ramp

Sketch showing erection of prone moai onto pedestal

suggested a full-scale field test, since a levering demonstration would be a nice follow-up to the UCLA work. NOVA agreed.

Using some skinny leftover poles and a roll of light cord, we hastily tied up a sled and two ladders to move a 3-ton rock. Lacking material, we ended up with half the number of ladder rungs and crossbars called for by my design, but I figured it wouldn't matter when moving such a small rock.

When the rock arrived around 10 am on the last day of the shoot, it weighed at least 6 tons and looked like a giant Idaho spud. Our sled and ladders seemed woefully flimsy and inadequate for the task. Also, the "crane" we thought we'd have to get the rock off the truck and onto the sled turned out to be a 2-ton swing arm hoist mounted on the truck. It proved all but useless. There was nothing left but to roll our "*moai*" off the truck. When we did, it shattered the edge planks with an ominous thud and settled into a shallow ditch.

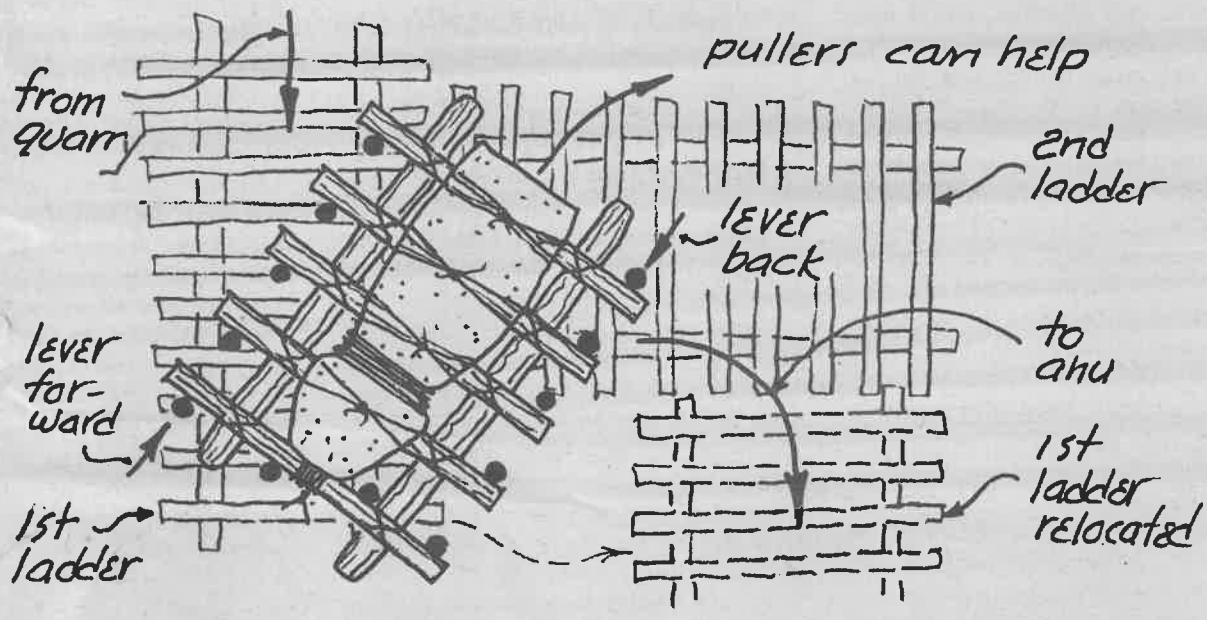
Just getting the boulder back onto the sled turned into a huge project. We finally levered it up onto one of its "edges" but chipped off great chunks of rock in the process. When at last it rolled onto our sled, we had our simulation of a *moai* in prone position.

The rock had visibly crushed the sled, cracked one runner, and pressed the whole thing into the mud at the bottom of the ditch. Worse, there were no sliders underneath. With the camera rolling, we began levering the grossly overloaded tangle of poles up out of the ditch and onto the first ladder, prying between the projecting cross bars on the sled and the ground. This proved horrendously inefficient. Our levers "kicked out" as we pushed them vertical, so that much of the force went up instead of moving the sled forward. Also, while moving the sled onto the ladder, the hastily tied lashings beneath the sled's cross bars tended to hang up on the sliders.

Still, in all, somewhat to our amazement, the sled nonetheless moved forward, and in about an hour we almost got it onto the first ladder. But with time, energy, and daylight running short, NOVA asked us to switch gears. They now wanted us to rotate the sled. This worked out quite well. It took us only a few minutes to rotate the sled about 30 degrees.

Someone watching our struggle exclaimed, "Look at it. It's a mess!" I had to agree, but on the other hand, it worked. Even though we did everything wrong, my twelve-man crew managed to lever a six-ton rock about 15 feet in an hour and a half, each man moving 1000 pounds of rock without pullers. With a little practice, we most certainly would have performed more impressively, but as it was, we moved our *moai* at about 80-100 feet per day—about the same rate as the UCLA team did with 4 to 6 times as many people. We would have reached the *ahu* without needing anyone to pull from the seaward side.

Did the ancient Rapa Nui do it this way? We may never know—but I have yet to see another way to move an 80-ton *moai* the last few hundred feet up onto a seacoast *ahu*.



Sketch showing scheme for rotating sled 180 degrees en route

On December 15, 1998,

my friend Bruce Davis and I collaborated on a full scale stone block moving experiment at his masonry contracting yard in Brighton, Colorado. Davis's crew provided a 13-ton block of white marble. Mark Younghein put together a 10 x 15 foot sled and four 5 x 10 ladder sections from stout pine logs. People working atop the load and on the sled used long and short levers about 3 inches thick.

About 30 volunteers showed up on the day of the test. Based on my experience on Easter Island, I thought that each person might move 1000 pounds of rock. We abandoned plans to use water as a lubricant when the moisture either soaked into the soft pine logs or quickly evaporated into the high, dry mountain air. Instead, we greased the sled runners with lard.

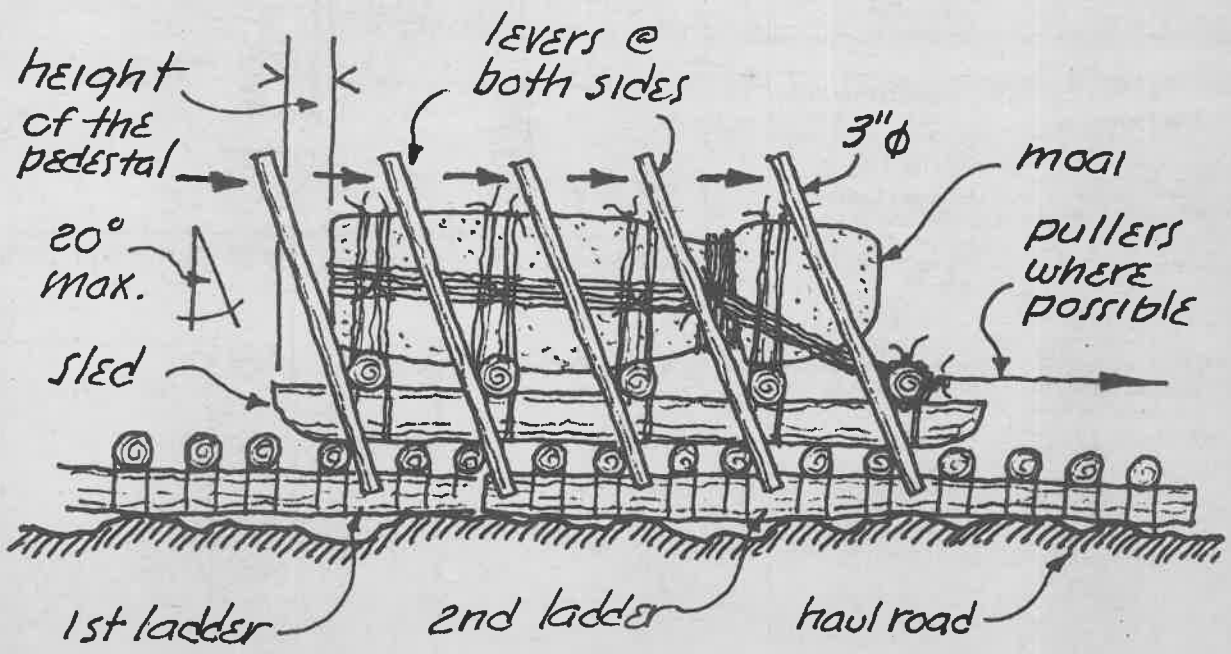
The goal we set was simple: Move the rock up the ramp and rotate it 90 degrees with levers alone, using only the working surface of the ramp. After a nervous first effort, we cut the numbers of levermen to see how few people could move the sled on level ground. Eight long levers, pushed from atop the 13-ton block, was all it took.

Adding people as needed along the way, we moved the load up the steepest part of an incline with 26 people. The sled tended to backslide slightly when the crew ceased forward pressure, but two "brakemen" easily halted the sled by jamming their levers whenever we stopped.

We accomplished our mission with levers alone, and it took only about two hours to climb a 55-foot ramp and make the turn at the top. The system worked exactly as expected, but the animal fat was critical to our success. Would more slippery lubrication have improved our performance? Perhaps not, as easier uphill movement might have also increased the danger of downhill slippage, creating problems with controlling the sled.

The Sisyphus Project

Vincent R. Lee



Sketch showing overland movement of sled with moai loaded prone

In the spring of 1998, I worked with NOVA on a television special about Easter Island on different ways of moving and erecting *moai*, the huge stone statues for which the island is famous.

NOVA focused on the field test of a scheme developed by a team from UCLA led by Dr. Jo Anne Van Tilburg. I was asked to critique her methods as a neutral observer who was not familiar with Easter Island but who had some experience in the handling of large rocks (e.g. in Peru with NOVA, 1994).

The UCLA Field Test

The UCLA team planned to move a 15-ton concrete replica *moai* overland onto a fieldstone *ahu* (platform) and leave it standing erect with a *pukao* (stone topknot) balanced on its head. The transport scheme was to move the *moai* 1) in prone position; 2) head-first on a simple A-frame shaped sled; 3) with people pulling the sled; 4) across log rollers laid over pairs of poles positioned railwise on the ground. Once at the *ahu*, the *pukao* would be placed atop the *moai*, and the entire sled levered and chocked up to a vertical position.

I approached the project with no theories of my own, my mind entirely open to Van Tilburg's ideas. My only reservation was about the use of rollers, which I knew from experience are hard to manage under field conditions. These reservations proved right.

Vincent R. Lee is an architect in Jackson Hole, Wyoming with an MFA in architecture from Princeton. His work has appeared in Northern Lights, Andean Past, *the* Boletin de Lima, *and* Kuelap.

No sooner had the test begun than the rollers went askew. Pinned under 9 tons of rock, they took several hours to set right. Improvising, the UCLA team lashed the rollers to the sled runners to form sliders across the rails on the ground. A crew of about 40 was then able to pull the reconfigured sled, apex-first, quite easily for 50 or so meters.

The next day, the UCLA crew changed the direction of the sled. All the *moai* that stand at the base of Easter Island's quarry cliffs, apparently awaiting transport, face outward toward the sea. Many others that now lie toppled from their platforms, on the other hand, clearly faced inland when they were standing. This means that the Rapa Nui had to rotate the *moai* 180 degrees when transporting them. Members of the UCLA team suggested that rotating a *moai* would be "a trivial matter" if done by hand, but I noted they made no attempt to do so. Instead, they used a crane to turn their sled around so that the *moai* approached the *ahu* feet first.

On the third day, to move the sled the final two meters up to the *ahu*, the UCLA team jury-rigged additional cross bars on the A-frame that allowed it to be pushed with levers. Ultimately, only a large crew pulling the sled on the open ground well behind the *ahu* could close the gap.

This made me question two elements of Van Tilburg's scheme: the structural simplicity of the sled design and her near-total reliance on pullers behind the *ahu* to move the *moai*. Since most *ahus* are near the sea, the Rapa Nui wouldn't have been able to use a long line of pullers behind the *ahu* for the simple reason that they would have fallen into the sea as the *moai* approached its final destination.

Van Tilburg commented that all the improvisations her team came up with along the way were only to be expected in the face of such a difficult and challenging task. When I imagined her 9-ton test replica as an 80-ton monolith, I couldn't help but think precisely the opposite. The Rapa Nui almost certainly anticipated every contingency involved in getting the *moai* from the quarry to its pedestal and worked out every detail of the process before beginning the work.

An Impromptu Alternative

Watching the UCLA's team's glacial progress on day three, I thought there had to be a better way.

Since, with enough people, almost anything can be dragged across open country, the crux of the problem is moving the *moai* onto the *ahu*. In the Andes, in Egypt, and elsewhere, big rocks are similarly found in locations too constricted for the large gangs of pullers necessary to have dragged them there. Levers were the only tools pre-industrial people had for multiplying muscle power. Used to maneuver huge stones in confined places, levers greatly reduce both the work force and the space needed. In theory, people could push a stone from either side or behind, eliminating the need for any pullers at all—exactly what would be needed to get a large *moai* up onto its *ahu*.

How would it work?

Imagine several ladder-like frames laid end to end on the ground. The rungs, lashed across the tops of the rails and projecting out several feet on each side, function as fixed sliders. Now lay an identically constructed sled on top of the sliders, runners down.

The *moai*, padded and supported to prevent damage, is laid prone atop the crossbars and tied in place with its bottom end the same distance from the end of the sled as the height of the pedestal it's to be placed on.

It's now possible to pull and/or lever the sled from one ladder to the next, leapfrogging the last ladder ahead to provide a smooth roadway, regardless of terrain. Pullers can be used when possible, but levermen working between the ladder rungs and the projecting crossbars can get things moving, provide extra power when going uphill, and nudge the sled onto the *ahu* when no space is left for the pullers. The more levermen, the better, as long as there is enough space for each to work effectively and with the others.

To rotate the sled 180 degrees without difficulty is simply a matter of levering one side forward and the other back.

Once I came up with this method, I made a small model to illustrate it to NOVA. I then

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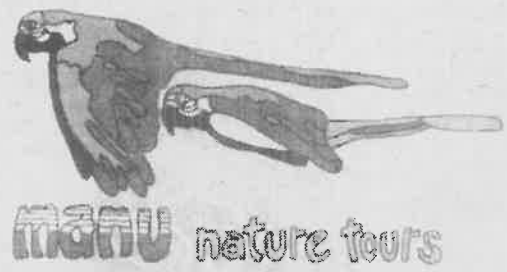

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Well, this time it's different. One thing we can tell you for sure: There's no virtual bean in the pot with the X. In one of the other pots, yes. All you have to do to win is guess which pot. Still, knowing that it's not in the X-marked pot is a big advantage. At least you won't have to waste a good guess on that pot.
Rules? Of course there are rules!

1. Multiple entries will be spotted immediately and result in instantaneous disqualification and a black mark on your permanent record.

2. Note the receptacles on the lower left of the picture. These are not pots. They may have beans virtual or actual in them. Who can say? But pick one of these, and you lose. Period.

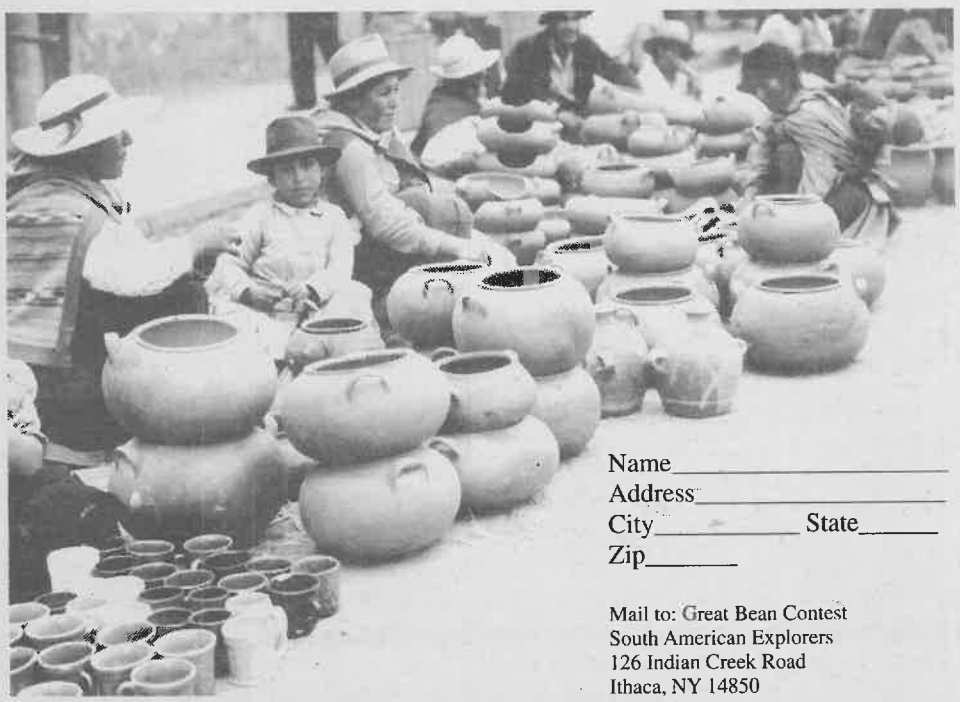
3. Don't bother to study the faces of the Andean vendors. It so happens this shot was taken before anyone had a notion of a virtual bean, so there's nothing to learn.

4. How can you be sure there's a virtual bean in any of the pots? Because we say so! Even more, we've Xeroxed the picture and marked the pot that the bean's in. There are elaborate instructions on where to find the photocopied picture so that the winner can be assured that they will receive their prize, even if the Ithaca clubhouse is destroyed by fire.

5. Is entering the Great Bean Contest worth beans? (Ha, ha! Get it? Worth "beans"?) You bet. The winner receives a genuine, hand-woven cotton shawl. What makes this shawl so special is that no dyes were used. Instead, the different earth colors are the actual, natural shades of different strains of cotton. This shawl is one in a thousand and will make the lucky winner proud.

6. To enter the contest, you must be the first one to send in the actual page or a Xerox copy clearly marking an X on the virtual bean-holding pot. The first one to pick the right pot wins.

Simple? Yes. Don't wait. Mail your entry now and mark it "Great Bean Contest." Good luck.



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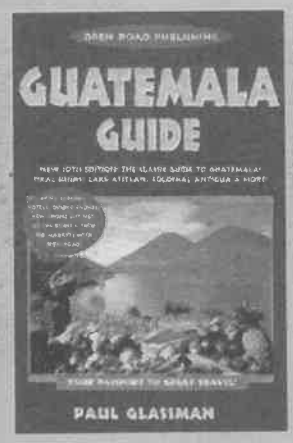

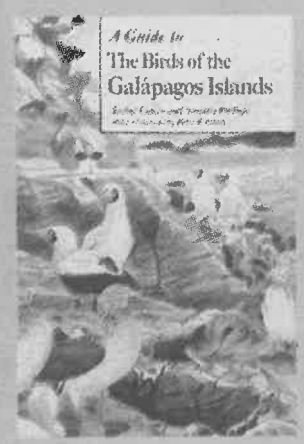

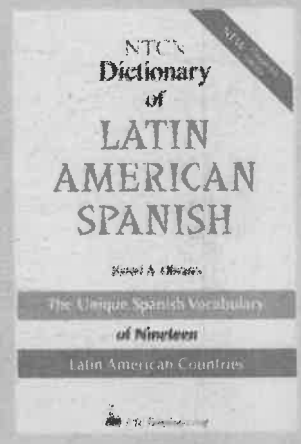

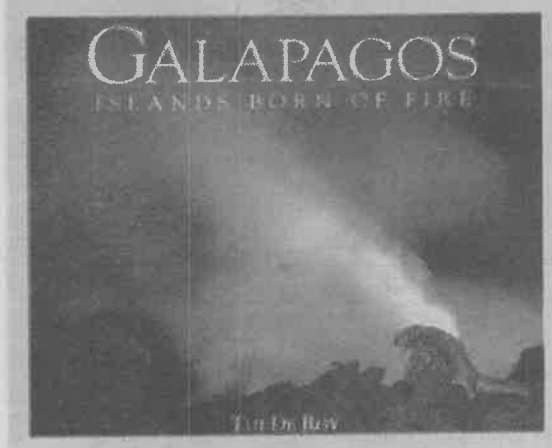

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